MURDER OF DEMOCRACY

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Dedicated

to

SARDAR VALLABH BHAI PATEL

The architect of Indian freedom and unity

who

would have led the country against the forces of totalitarianism as he did against British Imperialism if he had been alive today.

PREFACE

Twenty-five years have passed since India regained her independence after long centuries of foreign rule. But that foreign rule, except during the 100 years of British rule, seldom extended to the whole country. Vast areas maintained their freedom even during the hey day of Mughal rule. What distinguishes India from most other countries which have suffered foreign domination at some time or the other in the course of their history, is that the people of India never completely submitted to the foreign rule. Right from 712 A.D., when King Dahir Sen of Sindh died fighting the Arab invaders to 1947 when the British left India for good, there has never been a day when some patriot or the other did not keep on the struggle for freedom in some part of the country or the other. It is this galaxy of men of action, freedom fighters and warriors besides the men of thought who kept India alive as a nation all through these centuries of foreign rule.

The second factor which has helped India to maintain its distinct historical and cultural identity all through the ages is her cultural heritage and continuity of her social and political institutions right from the time of the Rig Veda to the present day. Concept of a universal God—"Satyam", "Shivam", "Sundaram"—and acceptance of equal relevance of various ways to realise Him which distinguishes Indian thought and philosophy from the philosophy of monolithic religions like Islam and Communism, has given Indian thinking and institutions a resilience and adaptability which has been the greatest asset of India through the ages. Conformism to any one type of political thought and institutions is as foreign to Indian genius as conformism to any one form of worship. That explains the co-existence of differ-

ent forms of government like co-existence of different forms of worship in this ancient land.

Democratic or republican forms of government have been in existence in India right from the days of Mahabbharata. Even when republican states disappeared from the Indian scene by about 5th century A.D., democratic institutions in the form of "Gram Panchayat" and "Paur Sabhas" continued to flourish in the country. The vitality of village Panchayats as late as 1853 is testified by Sir Charles Metcalf, the governor of the then North West Province (modern U.P.) of British India who described the self-governing villages of Uttar Pradesh as "republics in miniature."

After the experience of 1857, the British Government destroyed the Panchayat system and the self-governing institutions, which sustained India's socio-economic fabric and political continuity, with a vengeance. But the British rulers of India being conversant with and wedded to a democratic system of a different type in their own country could not do away with democratic institutions altogether. In place of the indigenous institutions, they started introducing institutions based on the British model. The district boards and municipal committees first set up during the viceroyalty of Lord Ripon in the early eighties of the last century were constituted on the model of British county and borough councils.

Having once decided to introduce democratic institutions and seek association of the people with the government through them, though on a very limited scale and for limited purpose, the British rulers could not stop the process at their will. It gathered momentum as time passed. The situations created by the two successive World Wars forced the British to accept the logical end and depart from the Indian scene after bequeathing the governance of the country to the representative of the Indian people through institutions they had created and developed on the British model. But as a parting kick, they partitioned the country before they left it for good on August 15, 1947.

The constitution of India which was adopted by the Constituent Assembly of India on 26th of November 1949 is

the best tribute of India to Britain. It made India a parliamentary democracy on the British model.

Apart from enlightened public opinion, general understanding of the significance and importance of the right to vote, and existence of at least two strong and viable political parties, parliamentary democracy stands on three pillars. First and most important of them is fair and free elections. The other two are an independent judiciary and freedom of thought and expression, including freedom of the press.

Modern Indian democracy from its very inception in 1952, when the first general elections on the basis of the Constitution of free India were held, has been handicapped by the absence of a strong and evenly-balanced opposition party which could project itself as a viable alternative to the Congress Party to which the power of governing India was bequeathed by the British before they left.

But in spite of the absence of a strong and viable opposition and general illiteracy and poverty of the people, democracy had been steadily taking roots in India. The first four general elections in India were on the whole fair and free, judiciary, particularly the Supreme Court of India, maintained its independence and it saw to it that fundamental rights guaranteed by the constitution, including freedom of thought and expression and right to property, were respected by the powers that be. It also goes to the credit of the leadership of the Congress Party that it respected the Parliamentary institutions and preserved the pillars on which they stand.

The situation changed in 1967 when Congress monopoly of power was broken for the first time in many states and a change of government at the centre also became a distinct possibility.

A really democratic leadership would have welcomed the new situation which put Indian democracy and democratic institutions to a real test for the first time. But the ruling party and its communist allies and patrons inside and outside the country, who never had any faith in democracy and the free institutions that sustain it, considered the new situa-

ent forms of government like co-existence of different forms of worship in this ancient land.

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tion to be a danger to their position. They then began a planned effort to disrupt democracy by demolishing the pillars on which it stands. They began with rigging of elections. The elections to Lok Sabha held in March 1971 were rigged in a large number of constituencies. It was literally an operation murder democracy. The composition of the new Lok Sabha, as also the names of the opposition leaders who were to be allowed to win, were said to have been settled beforehand.

After having obtained a packed parliament, the ruling party and their patrons are now going ahead with their plans to hamstring the independence of the judiciary and curb the freedom of thought, expression and of the press.

As things are, democracy in India is dying a slow death. With concentration of all power in the hands of a small coterie, the country is steadily but surely being led towards totalitarianism of the Communist model.

In the circumstances, only a miracle can save democracy in India from going the way it went in many countries of Asia and Africa.

The present study is an attempt at presenting the course of Indian democracy during the last twenty-five years in its historical setting and perspective with special reference to "operation murder democracy". The writer being himself an active participant on the Indian scene cannot claim to be absolutely objective in the treatment of the subject. The object is not to run down any person or party, but to present the events as they have been unfolding themselves factually and faithfully and drawing conclusions from them.

The suggestions about salvaging Indian democracy even at this late and critical stage represent my personal view-point and not the view-point of any party. I would feel amply rewarded if this study makes genuine democrats and democratic parties realise the gravity of the situation and act before it is too late.

5 November 1972
New Delhi

BALRAJ MADHOK

CHAPTER I

A Way of Life

Democracy which has been variously defined and described as "Government of the People, by the People, for the People", "government by discussion" and a government in the making and running of which the people have a direct or indirect hand, has come to be accepted as the most respectable and popular form of government in the present-day world. This is proved by the fact that even the States run by military, fascist or communist dictators, which are actually anti-thesis of democracy, prefer to call themselves democratic.

The form through which the object of people's participation in the decision making institutions and processes is achieved though important is not basic to the issue of democracy. The basic thing is the spirit, the acceptance of the principle that man is a thinking animal and that human personality and individuality must be recognised and respected. This demands guarantee of freedom of thought, expression and association. Freedom to seek legal redress from an independent judiciary if his fundamental rights are trampled upon and assurance of fair and free elections through which he may get himself elected or elect others to represent him in the decision making institutions. That is why freedom of thought and expression including freedom of the Press, independence of the judiciary and fair and free elections are considered to be three pillars on which the edifice of democracy stands. All these three are inter-connected and inter-dependent. Destruction of or tampering with any one of them can make the whole edifice of democracy collapse.

CHAPTER I

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Success and survival of democracy in any country primarily depends upon the respect for and inviolability of these three basic postulates through eternal vigilance of the people and establishment of proper conventions and norms to prevent abuse of power and subversions of these essential pre-requisites of democracy by the person or persons who might have risen to power even through democratic means.

That is why democracy is considered to be more a way of life than just a form of government. It is the approach, the outlook, particularly of the political elite in regard to these basic things which determine the course of democracy in any country. It requires readiness on the part of the person or persons in power not only to respect the verdict of the people but also, and that is more important, to create condition in which such verdict can be freely given. This demands not only faith in the system, but also determination to preserve its purity through application of only right and democratic means to achieve the end of power. Tacit acceptance and scrupulous observance of the principle of right means for the right end is therefore essential for maintenance and success of democracy in any country. As against it, "end justifies the means" has always been the guiding principle of authoritarian States and rulers, be they autocratic monarchs or military, fascist or communist dictators.

India is the largest democracy of the world. Democrats and democratic States all over the world, therefore, have not only deep interest but also a vital stake in the success and survival of democracy in India. If democracy fails in India, it will have its ramification and repercussions far beyond its frontiers. It may sound death knell of democracy not only in Asia but in the world as a whole as well. That explains the need and importance of an objective study of the working of democracy in India, the factors for and against its success and its possible future in the light of the experience since the Constitution of India, through which the founding fathers of the Indian republic ordained that India shall be a Parliamentary democracy, came into operation.

But even though the Parliamentary institutions through which Indian democracy functions have been fashioned after the British model and as such are guided mainly by the British Parliamentary Practice and Conventions, the condition in India and the political mind of its people are rooted in a different soil which has had a much longer and more chequered and varied experience of politics—Dand Niti—both in its theoretical and practical aspects. Even the British could not ignore that past and had to re-fashion their institutions to suit the Indian conditions and experience.

Therefore any worthwhile study of working of Indian democracy during the last two decades and any assessment about its future demands some understanding of the evolution of political mind and institutions of India through the ages and the impact of the new thought currents, that entered India with the advent of the British rule. A clear perception and understanding of this historical evolution of Indian political thought, behaviour and institutions is therefore essential for proper assessment of the present day India's political mind, the lines on which it has been developing and its implications for the future of Parliamentary democracy in this ancient country.

CHAPTER II

The Historical Perspective

India is an ancient country. It has been cradle of one of the earliest cultures and civilizations of the world. As homeland of Vedic Aryans who in course of time moved west and east from their original home of "Sapt Sindhwa", the land of 7 rivers of the Indus system, it was also the cradle of the Rig Veda which, together with other 3 Vedas and vast Vedic literature, gives us the first glimpse of evolution of Indian mind and thought in the field of Dand Niti, the science of Government and politics. Men of thought and action took up the thread from the Vedas and the experience of the Vedic Aryans in state-craft and made bold experiments in the realm of political thought and action in the course of centuries. Different forms of Government including democracy were tried by them long before anything of the kind was even conceived by ancient Greeks and Romans That is why Will Durant considers 'Mother India' to be the mother of Democracy as well.

The democratic institutions in India can be traced from "Sabha" and "Samiti", the two popular bodies which assisted the Vedic kings in carrying on their Government. The importance attached to them is clear from the fact that they have been described as "Twin daughters of Prajapati". From Sabha of the Vedic times to Lok Sabha of the present day India is a long story, but the link between the two in the Indian mind and thought has to be clearly understood and comprehended in making an objective assessment of the future of democracy in this country.

The republican States occupied a very important place in the Indian State system during the period of Lord Krishna and Lord Buddha, both of whom came from Republican States of the Vrashnis and the Sakiyas. *The Lichhwi republic of* North Bihar with its capital at Vaishali remained dominant State in North-East India for centuries. When Ajatshatru *started expanding his kingdom of Magdh in* South Bihar he came in clash with Lichhwis. He wanted to incorporate it within his growing empire. Finding his task difficult, he sent his *Prime Minister to* Mahatma *Budh*, who was then a friend, philosopher and guide of kings and commoners alike, to ask as to how the Lichhwi republic could be vanquished. In reply Mahatma Budh, as recorded in the Buddhist literature, said that the republic of Lichhwis would continue to flourish so long as it took all its decisions after full and free discussion in the assembly of the republic, so long as it followed the tradition, so long as it paid due attention to the advice of the elders and so long as it honoured its women. The reference to tradition by Mahatma Budh is of great significance. In a monarchical system, the link with the past is provided by the ruling dynasty which has no place in a republican system. But link with the past is as important in a republican State as in a monarchical State. That link is provided by tradition, which must be shown due respect by a republican people as well. The British people seem to have understood the significance of this advice of Mahatma Budh better than anybody else. The assiduous care with which they have tried to preserve, nourish and cherish the British traditions is one secret of the success of British democracy.

That India had a number of flourishing republican States in Punjab and Sindh in the 4th Century B.C. is borne out by the chronicles of Alexander's invasion of India. Significantly these republican States offered stiffer resistance *to the Greek invaders than the monarchical States because* every citizen in such States had a stake in freedom.

The Republican States disappeared from the Indian *scene after* 4th Century A.D., but the republican tradition continued. The autonomy of the Indian villages, of the vil-

lage community and the caste and professional groups was a part of this democratic tradition. That autonomy continued long after democratic States ceased to exist. The strength and effectiveness of this grass root democracy of India is well-testified by a large number of inscriptions and other accounts of the working of such bodies both in North and South India.

This grass root democracy and freedom of action and growth enjoyed by different territorial, social and economic communities was in keeping with the Indian concept of State and comprehension of Dand Niti which is very near to the modern concept of politics, which, with the rapid expansion of the scope and function of the State, is becoming all embracing. This is clear from the discussion in the very first chapter of the 'Arthashaster of Chanakya'. While discussing the relative importance of the four main sciences—'Anvikshki' (Philosophy), 'Trayi' (the Triple Vedas), 'Vrata' (Agriculture, cattle breeding and trade) and 'Dand-Niti' (science of Government), Chanakya after discussing the views of Usanas who held that Dand-Niti was the most important science, because "it is in that science that all other sciences have their origin and end," opined that all these four sciences are equally important and that Dand-Niti or Science of Politics divorced of Trayi representing Dharma, Vrata representing general welfare and Anvikshki representing philosophy of life could not be an end in itself.

It is clear from this that Indian theory of politics never visualised an omnipotent State seeking to guide and control every aspect of man's life nor was it divorced from ethical and moral values that governed the life of the people in Society. In fact both the State and politics according to Indian tradition must have ethical base that lies at the root of the concept of "Dharma-Rajya" or the rule of law. The aim and purpose of the State was to promote "Dharma", moral and ethical basis of every individual's behaviour in society, "Artha", the economic welfare, "Kama", the satisfaction of human urges and "Moksha", the spiritual end of life.

This concept of Indian State is very different from the concept of theocratic States as developed by Christian West and Islamic middle-east. It was positively secular in the *broader Indian sense of "Sarva Dharma Sama Bhav"* (सर्व धर्म सम-भाव) in which all forms of worship and ways of thought got equal respect without any special concession to any particular sect, religious order or belief-*system at the cost of others. It ensured equality before the* law in all matters temporal for all faiths. It did not recognise any established church or religion. But it was not a secular State in the negative sense of a State without a *moral purpose and obligation to promote moral and ethical* health of the people. A natural corollary of this concept of State was that ancient Indian State believed in the principle of Government which governs the least. It gave freedom of action of the individual *whose life in all respects was govern*-ed more by the customs and usages as prevailing in his village, caste or professional community than by the authority of the State. The ruler whether monarchical or democratic, as supreme organ of political life, was to protect the "Swa-Dharma" of his people. His main duty was to set an example before his people in observance of his code of conduct—Raj-Dharma—*laid down by the law-givers for him.* His influence was felt not so much through governance as by the example he set of his own life before the people. 'Yatha Raja Tatha Praja'—'as the king so the people'—was the *popular view about the role of the Government as personified* by the king in the life of the Rashtra or nation. It was his duty to see that the life of the common man and the autonomy and *self-sufficiency of the village communities remained un*-affected by extraneous factors, even by war. But they all took active interest in their local affairs through the village panchayats and other such local institutions. This made them deeply attached to their Dharma and their freedom—"Swa-Dharma" and "Swarajya" which sustained each other.

It was thus the self-governing and autonomous village communities and caste groups which enabled India to preserve its traditional life and culture during the long period of foreign Muslim rule imposed by Arabs, Turks and Mughal

invaders over large parts of the country. The common man was little affected by political changes in the seats of power like Delhi, Lahore and Jaunpur. In fact he remained indifferent about them so long as the foreign rulers left him and his "Dharma" alone.

This attitude of indifference to foreign rule changed when the Muslim rulers extended their power to the remote villages and began to pursue a policy of direct and systematic attack on the 'Dharma' and institutions held in esteem by the common people. That resulted in the popular reaction led by the followers of sage Vidya-Aranya in the south, Ram Das and Shivaji in Deccan, Sikh Gurus and Banda Bahadur in the Punjab, Maharanas of Mewar in Rajasthan and a galaxy of Jat leaders in Haryana and Braj region of modern Uttar Pradesh. These freedom movements had their ramifications in other parts of the country as well. By the middle of the 18th century they succeeded in over-throwing the Muslim rule from large parts of the country.

At the same time a process of Indianisation of the foreign invaders and Indian Islam also began. A large number of converts who had embraced Islam mainly under duress and on whom Islam sat rather lightly began to act as link between the national society which was described in the contemporary literature as "Hinduan" and the foreign invaders and their co-religionists who began to be described as "Turkadas".

This together with the rise of powerful national States in different parts of the country created a condition of equilibrium in which the "Turkadas" and the remaining Muslim States started getting adjusted with national life and national culture. But this situation did not last long. The entry of the British into the arena as a serious contestant for power and their policy of 'divide and rule', created a new situation. But when the British tried to use their power in India for spreading Christianity in the country as was clear from the open exhortations by people like Reverend Kennedy who said, "We must use all the power and the

authority in our hands, until India becomes the bulwark of Christianity in Asia" and Mr. Maugels, the Chairman of the Board of Directors of the East India Company, who declared in the British Parliament that "providence has entrusted the extensive empire of Hindustan to England in order that the banner of Christ should wave triumphant from one end of India to another", created an equally strong reaction against the new intruders. This reaction was shared by Hinduan and Turkadas in common. They joined together in a determined bid to oust the British from India in 1857. That national effort failed due to various reasons. But it marked the end not only of East India Company but also of the armed resistance to the new foreign rule. With the extension of the direct rule of the British Crown and Parliament over India, a new period in the evolution of Indian political thought and institutions began.

The events of 1857 and the ruthless suppression of Indians by the British that followed left lasting impression on the minds of both parties. The Indians felt frustrated and humiliated. Their self-confidence was rudely shaken. They tacitly recognised the superiority of the British in arms and diplomacy. A good number of people reconciled themselves to the British rule and began to yearn for a spell of peace and stable Government. Some contemporary leaders of thought like Raja Ram Mohan Roy and others who had been brought up under British influence and education, began to talk of accepting the British as natural leaders and superiors and began to propagate the view that the salvation of India lies in accepting English language and British culture and institutions. But there were some dauntless spirits like Maharishi Dayanand Sarasvati who felt that India's downfall was not so much due to the British superiority as to the weaknesses that had crept into the Indian society during long period of foreign rule. He therefore began the movement for re-vitalising the Hindu Society in the light of the ancient Indian experience and traditions. He created a new self-confidence and self-respect among his followers who began to stand up to the British not as supplicants but as equals who had fallen on bad days.

Not only in the social and cultural field but also in the political field Indian thought and action since 1857 has been influenced by these two lines of approach represented by Raja Ram Mohan Roy and Maharishi Daya Nand Sarasvati. Lokmanya Tilak, Lala Lajpat Rai, Bipin Chander Pal, Aurobindo Ghosh, Sardar Ajit Singh, Bhai Parma Nand, Pt. Madan Mohan 'Malviya', Sardar Vallabh Bhai Patel, Vir Savarkar and Dr. S. P. Mukherjee, were mainly influenced by the thought of Dayanand, while the new breed of Macaulay's Indians represented by Pt. Moti Lal Nehru, Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru, Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru and the fellow-travellers began to look to Raja Ram Mohan Roy for inspiration in their craze for everything western and English. They suffered from an inferiority complex which also coloured their politics and political thinking.

The British administrators on the other hand realised for the first time the dangers inherent in any attempt to govern a vast country like India without knowing the wishes and reactions of the people about their policy. So they adopted a two-fold policy. In the first place they gave up the idea of using their State power for spreading Christianity. They decided not to interfere with the customs and religious life of the Indian people. Secondly they began to think about devising ways and means of knowing the Indian mind through associating them in some way in the making of laws for the Indian people.

Indian Council Act of 1861 was the first step in that direction. It made provision for reinforcement of the Viceroy's Executive Council by a maximum of twelve additional members, half of whom were to be non-officials, when it transacted legislative business. In 1862 Lord Canning nominated three Indians to his Legislative Council. But power of these Indian members was strictly limited. They were there simply to assist and advise the British executive in respect of the legislation sponsored by it.

The two decades following upon the Indian Councils Act of 1861 saw the emergence of an English educated Indian intelligentsia with an increasing interest in the administra-

tion of their country. It steadily became more and more critical of the acts of Government. The Vernacular Press Act passed by Lord Lytton in 1878 created a strong reaction in the educated classes who got a lesson in constitutional agitation from the Europeans who successfully resisted the Ilbert Bill through which Lord Ripon sought to remove the distinction between the European and Indian judges in the matter of trial of Europeans.

This discontentment erupted in violence as well. The uprising led by Amir Khan Wahabi in North India and Vasudev Balwant Phadke in Maharashtra and the murder of Lord Minto by a Wahibi prisoner in Andamans, created a stir in the British ruling circles. They began to feel the necessity of channelising the discontent among the intelligentsia and giving it an outlet.

That provided the genesis for the creation of the Indian National Congress by a British civilian, Mr. A. O. Hume, in 1885 with the direct support of the Viceroy, Lord Dufferin, to provide a platform to the educated but loyal Indians for giving vent to their reactions and feelings about the administrative policies of the British and make prayers and petitions about concessions desired.

At the same time steps were taken to give increased representation to Indians in the Imperial and provincial legislative councils through the Indian Councils Act of 1892. A majority of seats reserved for non-official Indian members were to be filled on the recommendation of municipalities, district boards, commerce bodies and Universities. But their powers remained limited to giving their advice on the legislative measures before the Council, asking questions and discussing the budget without the right to vote on it.

In the years that followed, the tempo of political awakening in the country was quickened by the administrative policies of Lord Curzon such as the partition of Bengal and passing of Indian Universities Act. The partition of Bengal was the first concrete move of the British to win over the Muslim classes by creating a province in which Muslims were to be in absolute majority. Its second aim was to put a curb on

the Hindu intelligentsia in Bengal whose political awakening had gone to an uncomfortable limit. The aim of the Universities Act was to increase the official control on the Indian Universities, to prevent them from becoming centres of political education and activity. The effect of these measures was just the opposite of what Lord Curzon had desired. They created a wave of resentment in the educated and politically conscious sections of the Indian population, particularly in Bengal. The contemporary developments in the international sphere, particularly defeat of Russia at the hands of Japan, a rising Asian Power, added hope and confidence to popular resentment. This situation gave new strength to popular leaders like Bipin Chander Pal, Aurbindo Ghosh in Bengal, Bal Ganga Dhar Tilak in Maharashtra and Lala Lajpat Rai in the Punjab. They gave a new turn to the agitation by giving a mass basis to the fast growing political awakening in the country by taking to vernacular languages and by projecting Shivaji as a successful national crusader for independence against foreign rule. As a result the popular agitation for the first time went beyond the accepted methods of prayer, petition and protest and took the form of boycott of British goods, big mass demonstrations and meetings. The declared aim of this mass movement was "Swarajya" and not a few more crumbs of political concessions. Lokmanya Tilak gave a lead by declaring that "Swaraj is my birth right and I shall have it". Bankim Chandra Chatterji supplied a national slogan to the movement by writing "Vande Mataram" as the patriotic song of freedom loving Sanyasis in his famous novel "Anand Math".

The movement soon went beyond the constitutional bounds. Some ardent spirits took to terrorist activities to make the British people in their island home feel that there existed an Indian problem as there was an Irish problem. They extended the sphere of their activities up to England where Vir Savarkar organised a secret Society of Indians abroad to assist and publicise the freedom movement in India. Shri Madan Lal Dhingra brought home the reality to the British people by killing Sir Curzen Wylie in London itself. This turn of events set the British rulers and the statesmen

a-thinking. They were shaken out of the complacent view held by many of them that they were destined to rule India for ever. They felt the need of placating the moderate section of Indian opinion by a further dole of political concessions. But before doing so they decided to wean away the Muslims as a body from the freedom movement by forging a sort of political alliance with them against Hindus who formed the core of the freedom movement all over the country.

This new policy was put in operation by Lord Minto with the help of Mr. Archhold, the British principal of M.A.O. college which later developed into Aligarh Muslim University. This institution has played a key role in sabotaging Indian nationalism and Indian unity from its very inception. The command performance of Aga Khan who led a deputation of the Muslims in 1906 to Simla to demand separate electorates and weightage for the Muslims got a ready response from the Viceroy, Lord Minto, who readily accepted this demand and assured the deputation that Muslims will be given separate representation commensurate with their political importance. Lady Minto described this development in her diary "as nothing less than the pulling back of by 68 million of people (Muslim population in the whole of India at that time) from joining the rank of seditious opposition". The All India Muslim League was established as a direct result of this assurance and its first session was held at Dacca in December, 1906.

The Minto-Morley Reforms Scheme which was implemented through an Act of British Parliament in 1909 introduced regular elections with separate electorate for Muslims, gave unofficial majorities in provincial councils and raised the strength of non-officials to 27 in a house of 60 in the case of Imperial Legislative Council at the Centre. To make these concessions more palatable to moderate leadership partition of Bengal was annulled and one Indian was taken on the Viceroy's Executive Council for the first time.

The net result of these reforms was that opportunity was provided to the Indian elite to have an idea of the working of parliamentary institution devised on the British model without tasting real power.

At the same time a policy of repression against nationalist leaders like Lokmanya Tilak who demanded real power and who could not be satisfied with the shadow boxing was put in operation. They were all jailed or externed from India. But their work was continued by Mrs. Annie Besant through the Indian Home Rule League.

The outbreak of the first World War radically altered the situation. As the war situation became more tight for the British, their dependence on India's war effort increased. The unity between the moderate and extremist section of the Indian National Congress and its pact with the Muslim League in 1916 through which Muslim League joined the demand for self-rule in return for tacit acceptance of the principle of separate representation for Muslims made some gesture to placate Indian opinion an imperative necessity for the British Government. The policy statement made by Mr. Montague, the Secretary of State for India in the British Parliament, in August 1917 was the result. It said that "increasing association of Indians in every branch of the administration and the gradual development of self-governing institutions with a view to progressive realisation of responsible government in India as an integral part of British empire" was the aim of the British policy in India.

Mr. Montague followed up this policy statement with a personal visit to India where he met the leaders of public opinion and prepared the blueprints of the Montague-Chelmsford Reforms Scheme which formed the basis of the Government of India Act of 1919.

The Act of 1919 extended the principle of separate electorate to the Sikhs, introduced dyarchy in the provinces where some departments of the government like education and local self-government were entrusted to the care of elected members for which they were to be responsible to the provincial councils while other department like Home and Finance continued to be the direct charge of the provincial governors through their nominated executive councillors. At the centre it raised the strength of Central Legislative Assembly to 144 with a majority of elected members. It was

given all the paraphernalia of British Parliament with power to put questions, move resolutions and introduce bills. But real and ultimate power remained vested in the British Governor-General.

The Government of India Act of 1919, though it fell far short of the expectations of the politically awakened people, provided an opportunity to the Indian leadership to exert constitutional pressure to the maximum and meet the British at their own game with confidence. Lokmanya Bal Ganga Dhar Tilak, the tallest Indian of that time, told Mr. Montague, who expected the stiffest opposition from him to his scheme that the British were giving India only a fraction of what it wanted. But, he added, that he will accept it and use the power thus obtained to carry on the struggle from inside and outside the legislatures for full "Swarajya".

To the great misfortune of India, Lokmanya Tilak passed away in July 1920. This provided the opportunity to Shri Mohan Das Karam Chand Gandhi, who had been searching for an opening to come to the top in Indian politics ever since his return from South Africa, where he had first tried the weapons of peaceful non-cooperation and civil disobedience with some success. With the help of erstwhile moderates like Pt. Moti Lal Nehru, he made his debut with the promise of Swarajya in one year if the people would follow his lead. He fully used the name and fame of Lokmanya Tilak to collect Tilak Swarajya Fund of Rs. one crore which provided him with material means to build up his movement.

The Jallian Wala Bagh massacre at Amritsar had created a strong revulsion against the British among the Indian masses. The Muslim leadership which had kept the Muslims out of the national movement and had been toeing the British line was alienated by the treaty of Severes which dismembered the Turkish empire and abolished the institution of Khilafat which gave claim to the Sultan of Turkey to be head of all the Muslims of the world irrespective of their nationality. The Muslim theologians—the Mullahs—and the Muslim intelligentsia of Aligarh School joined hands to launch a country-wide movement among the Muslims for the

restoration of the status and title of Khalifa to the Sultan of truncated Turkey. This was a purely religious demand based on extra-territorialism and denial of territorial nationalism inherent in the Islamic concept of "Dar-ul-Islam" and "Dar-ul-Harab".

Gandhiji was a well meaning person. But because of his ignorance of history, particularly Muslim history, and lack of understanding of the mind of the Muslim theologians and Aligarhi intelligentsia, and because of his desire to present a united front against the British, he fell in the trap of Ali brothers—Maulanas Mohammed and Shaukat Ali—who led the Khilafat movement and lent his full support to the Jehad—the holy religious struggle—that they were planning to launch against the British infidels. The money of the Tilak Swarajya fund as also the platform of the Congress was put at the disposal of Khilafatists to organise and mobilise Muslim opinion in favour of Khilafat movement in particular and against the British in general. This resulted in a short lived Hindu Muslim Bhai Bhaism in Indian politics.

The non-cooperation movement planned by Gandhiji in collaboration with the Khilafat committee implied boycott of the legislatures as well. Therefore the Congress as a body kept out of the first elections to the Central Legislative Assembly and provincial councils under the 1919 Act.

The non-cooperation movement was launched early in 1921. It stirred the Indian masses as nothing before had done. Boycott of the Prince of Wales who was then touring India had a deep impact on the British mind at home and the British rulers in India were greatly embarrassed. The Governor-General, Lord Reading, therefore proposed a round table conference with Congress leaders with a view to arrive at a political settlement on the line of Dominion Status for India. But the opportunity was thrown away by Mahatma Gandhi who would not enter into any dialogue with the British until Ali Brothers, who had been charged with sedition for openly inviting the Amir of Afghanistan to invade India to liberate it from the British rule, were released.

A few months later in February 1922 Mahatma Gandhi

suddenly withdrew the movement after the Chaura-Chauri incident in which a violent mob attacked a police station and killed a few policemen. It almost destroyed the effect of the movement and the proposal for Round Table Conference fell through.

Gandhiji admitted that he had committed many blunders. But this was perhaps the gravest of them. Had he possessed the realism and historical sense that characterised Lokmanya Tilak, India would have got Dominion Status in 1922 and would have been fully free as a united country long before 1947. Bad leadership is the greatest misfortune that can befall a people and a country. India has been very unlucky in this matter.

Failure of non-cooperation movement disillusioned even people like Moti Lal Nehru and C. R. Das who had been instrumental in bringing Gandhiji to the fore in the Indian politics. They now formed Swarajya Party to contest the elections and enter the legislatures.

At the same time the Khilafatist allies of Gandhiji found the ground under their feet slipping because of abolition of Turkish Sultanate itself by Kamal Ata Turk who declared Turkey to be a secular republic. They parted company with Gandhiji and the Congress. But they were now in a much stronger position. They had organised the Muslim masses and created in them Muslim consciousness as distinct from Indian consciousness. (The spirit of Jehad created in them against the Christian British infidels was now turned against the Hindu infidels and a period of bloody Hindu-Muslim riots all over the country began.)

Mahatma Gandhi refused to learn any lesson from these developments. Rather he began to pursue his policy of Muslim appeasement with a vengeance. This suited the British as well. They began to harp upon prior agreement of Muslims to any scheme of transfer of power to Indian hands. This created a new confidence in the Muslim leadership which began to put new demands every day and created inferiority complex and diffidence among the Hindus who formed the

core of the national movement for freedom. Thus Indian politics got bifurcated on communal lines.

Communal Award of 1932 and the partition of India on communal basis in 1947 was the direct result of these misconceived policies pursued by the Congress under Gandhiji's leadership in this crucial period.

Equation of Congress with the Hindus in the eyes of the government even though it assiduously tried to behave as if it was more Muslim than Hindu, made the position of Hindu Maha Sabha, which had been built as a counterpoise to the Muslim League, ridiculous.

In the meantime the red star also started rising on the Indian horizon. A number of Indian youngmen studying in foreign universities had come under the influence of Marxist ideas and spell of Russian revolution. The communist leaders of Russia were also interested in exporting communism to other corners of the world. To that end they organised the Communist International better known as "Commintern" to train foreign trainees in communist ideology and methodology. They paid special attention to India where M. N. Roy laid the foundation of the Communist Party of India under the guidance and active support of Commintern of which he became an executive member. Some other young Marxists like Shri Jai Prakash Narain and Pt. Jawahar Lal Nehru began to operate from within the Congress movement. They organised a socialist wing within the Congress under the name of Congress Socialist party. Pt. Jawahar Lal Nehru became the leading light of this socialist wing of the Congress from its very inception.

The working of dyarchy in the provinces gave the Indian political elite the first taste of power under a parliamentary system. The Central Legislative Assembly was turned into a mini-parliament by Shri Vithal Bhai Patel who was elected its speaker in spite of the bitter opposition of the government and its allies. The experience of working in these legislative bodies and the wide coverage that the press gave to their proceedings made a deep impact on the politically awakened people of India. Parliamentary democracy of the

British model began to take roots in the Indian soil during this period.

It was clear from the very beginning that the scheme of things based on the Act of 1919 was to be temporary and transitional. The Act itself had provided for the appointment of a commission by the British Government after 10 years to assess the progress made by India on the road to self-government and suggest further steps to transfer power to the Indian hands.

The British Government appointed one-man Simon Commission for that purpose in 1929. It was followed by two Round Table conferences at London in 1930 and 1931 to hammer out a new plan for self-government for India which was to be federation in which the Indian princely states could also join.

The main hurdle to the progress at the two Conferences was absence of rapport between Hindu or national viewpoint as represented by the Congress and the Muslim viewpoint in regard to sharing of power. The Muslim leadership, encouraged by the British policy of insistence on prior agreement on this question and Congress policy of appeasement, began to put its demand on a higher and higher pitch. In the absence of any national feeling it was out to get its pound of flesh before it would give green signal to any new scheme of things.

Communal Award which gave statutory majority to Muslims in Bengal, Punjab, North West Frontier Province and Sindh, which was to be separated from Bombay, and 33% representation to Muslim Community, which constituted only about 22% of the total population of the country, at the federal centre were provided for in the Government of India Act of 1935 which envisaged full provincial autonomy with a dyarchical federal centre with option to princely States to also join the proposed federation.

The passing of this Act by the British parliament marked a big step forward in the evolution of democratic institutions of the British model in India.

By this time the Muslim leadership had begun to think of partition of the country for carving out a Muslim majority bloc in the West of India comprising Punjab, Sindh, N.W.F.P. and Baluchistan. It was afraid that the weightage given to Muslims at the Centre by the Act of 1935 would be offset if and when Princely States which were mainly Hindu joined the federation. So it was opposed to the federal part of the Act of 1935.

The Congress leadership played into the hands of the Muslim League when it also rejected the federal part of the 1935 Act on the ground that it did not transfer full power to the Indian hands at the Centre.

Acceptance of the scheme of provincial autonomy, which was put in operation after election to provincial legislatures held in 1937, without simultaneous acceptance of the federal part of it which provided for the constitutional and political unity of the whole country including princely states was a grave folly. It encouraged Muslim leadership to persist in its politics of separation which culminated in the partition of 1947.

Secessionist demand for Pakistan was first raised in Muslism minority provinces, particularly in the then United Province of Agra and Oudh where the Muslim minority with a good section of Muslims of foreign origin refused to reconcile itself to the principle of majority rule. The feeling of this section of Muslims was voiced by Maulana Hali in his well known couplet:

रुखसत ऐ हिन्दोस्तान, ऐ बोस्तान बे खज़ान
रह चुके बहुत दिन हम बदेसी महमान।

"Farewell, O India, the garden in which autumn never comes
We foreigners have lived in you for long enough".

The first man to propound the theory of Pakistan was Dr. Iqbal who referred to it in detail in his presidential address at the Muslim League session held at Allahabad in 1930. Maulana Azad also indirectly referred to it when he acclaimed separation of Sindh from Bombay as a red letter

day for Indian Muslims because they could now have a compact territory of their own in the west of India.

But it was Ch. Khaliq-uz-zaman of U.P., a close friend of the Nehru family, and his associates of the Aligarh Muslim University who made the demand for partition of India a major issue and got it accepted as the main plank of the All India Muslim League at its Lahore Session in March 1940.

The situation then was very favourable for raising such a demand. The Congress which had formed its ministries in eight out of the eleven provinces of British India after its sweeping victory in the first elections under the Act of 1935 held in early 1937 frittered away, again thanks to its unrealistic and unpractical leadership, its strong bargaining power by ordering its provincial ministries to resign as a protest against the refusal of the British Government to take it into confidence about declaration of war in 1939. This voluntary exile of the Congress party from power into wilderness was both a gross betrayal of the Indian electorate which had put its faith in it and a bankruptcy of statesmanship. The British Government immediately turned its back on the Congress and forged an alliance with the Muslim League whose leadership had come in the able hands of Mr. Jinnah.

Mr. Mohammed Ali Jinnah was a leader thrown up by the parliamentary institutions and not by any kind of mass action which had thrown up the Congress leadership. He was one of the most modern and secular minded Indian Muslims on whom Islam sat very lightly. He had been in the Congress and would have been a fit instrument for Indianising Muslims and bringing them in the national mainstream. But he was repelled from the Congress by the pro-Mullah and pro-Khilafat line of Mahatma Gandhi, who mixed up religion with politics, and the haughtiness of Pt. Nehru who, though much junior to Mr. Jinnah in every way, began to behave as a spoiled child of the Congress because of Gandhiji who was under a deep debt of gratitude to his father Pt. Motilal Nehru for having sponsored him to the leadership of the Congress.

Mr. Jinnah used the Muslim League as an instrument to

wreck his vengeance on Mahatma Gandhi and Pt. Nehru whom he tried to humiliate and disparage at every step with the help of the British. He took up the demand for partition of India as a bargaining counter. He never really wanted partition. But he thought that he could use this demand as a handle to extract maximum concessions for Muslim community and prevent the British, whose patronage he thought was essential for keeping the Muslim community in a commanding position in India, from leaving India for good.

He played his cards extremely well till he was outmanoeuvred because of the installation of a Labour Government in Westminster. The formation of Interim Government in 1946 under the leadership of Pt. Nehru and without Muslim League provided a golden opportunity to the Congress leadership to free India from the bane of Secessionist politics of the Muslim League and prepare the way for the emergence of a united, independent and democratic India.

But that was not to be. Mahatma Gandhi bungled once again. He entered into negotiation with Nawab of Bhopal, the spokesman of Muslim League, over the head of Sardar Patel and other Congress leaders and paved the way for entry of Muslim League into the interim Government.

The civil war in the central government and the central secretariat that followed the induction of Muslim League into the government quickly converted Congress leaders to the concept of partition and Pakistan to be able to hold undisturbed power in truncated India at least. All canons of democracy and people's rights were thrown to the winds and approval was given to the Mountbatten plan of June 3, 1947 which threw the Hindus of East Bengal, West Punjab, and Sindhis, Baluchis and Pathans, both Hindu and Muslim, of Sindh, Baluchistan and N.W.F.P. to the mercy of new masters of Pakistan who hailed mainly from U.P. and other Muslim minority provinces left in India.

On 15th of August, 1947 the age-old geographical, cultural and historical unity of India which had been reinforced by the political unity provided by the hundred years of Bri-

tish rule was destroyed. The British left India almost in the same state in which they had found it when they made their bid for conquering it—a country divided into a number of Hindu and Muslim states struggling for domination over the whole land.

But there was one difference. The grass root democracy prevailing in the Indian villages which had survived onslaughts of foreign invasions and foreign rule for centuries had been totally destroyed. On the other hand a new kind of democratic institutions on the British pattern at the apex level had been introduced. The people and politicians of both the new states had developed understanding of the working of these institutions and a liking for the British system of parliamentary democracy. That became their model in determining their own political structure through their respective Constituent Assemblies.

CHAPTER III

Politics of Freedom

India became independent on August 15 after long centuries of foreign rule of Turks, Mughals and the British. As such it was a red letter day in the long annals of India. But it also became the darkest day of her history because on this day India was partitioned by the consent of the Congress leaders who submitted to the blackmail tactics of Muslim League and political manoeuvres of the British Government through Lord Mountbatten, the British Governor-General of India.

It is wrong to put the whole blame for partition of India on the British and the Muslim League. They succeeded because the Congress leadership lacked vision, foresight and guts. It first encouraged the Muslim League by its policy of appeasement and boosting of Mr. Jinnah. And when Muslim League after the election of 1946 assumed the character of most representative organisation of Muslim Indians, it began to tremble before its threats of violence and bloodshed. In its eagerness to get power quickly it submitted to the bluff and bluster of Muslim League and persuasions of Lord Mountbatten.

The British Government was prepared to go further to strengthen Pakistan and weaken India. As revealed by the recently published documents of U.S.A. Foreign Policy for the year 1947, the British were planning to have a direct relationship with Nizam of Hyderabad which would have made Hyderabad another Pakistan in the heart of India. They were prevented from doing so by stronger pressure

from the then Secretary of State of U.S.A., Mr. Dean Achaeson, who told the British Government that if British permitted Hyderabad to establish direct relations with the Crown, the U.S. might reconsider its support of the British policy towards India. It is well known that the U.S. Government was in favour of a unified federal India and was opposed to partition.

With the end of the British rule and departure of its trusted ally, the Muslim League, with its top leadership and most of its representatives in the Indian Constituent Assembly for Karachi, Indian politics and political institutions entered the most decisive and crucial stage of their development. Indian politics became real and the political institutions based on the Government of India Act of 1935 as also the Constituent Assembly that the British left behind began to pulsate with new life. The foundations of Indian democracy of today were laid during this period.

Since the Elections to the State legislatures whose members acted as the electoral colleges for the election of provincial representatives to the Constituent Assembly were held on the main issue of united India versus Pakistan, all the nationalists irrespective of caste, creed or party affiliations had voted for the Congress which publicly declared that it stood for United India and would resist partition at all costs. This was a ruse played by it on the gullible Indian people because it had virtually given away the case for united India by its Working Committee resolution of September 1945 which after recounting the benefits of maintaining the unity of India said, "Nevertheless the Committee declares also that it cannot think of compelling the people of any territorial unit to remain in Indian Union against their declared and established will". This was the price Congress had to pay to keep Maulana Azad with it. But in all its election campaign the Congress kept this last part of its resolution carefully hidden from the public eyes and ears. But it gave the necessary clue to the British and the Muslim League who worked for partition with greater vigour and confidence after the passing of this resolution by the Cong-

ress Working Committee. It enabled the Muslim League to collect virtually all Muslims under its banner. On the other hand the Congress leadership successfully played upon the general feeling of nationalist India against any scheme of partition of the motherland and persuaded all the other parties, including Hindu Maha Sabha, to withdraw from the electoral contest and support the Congress candidates. The only party other than the Congress and the Muslim League which contested the election in a big way was the Communist Party of India. But apart from its past anti-national role, its declared and open support for the demand for Pakistan had completely alienated it from the nationalist people. It therefore failed to get any seat in the Constituent Assembly which had only two parties—the Congress and the Muslim League.

This new situation made the presidency of the Congress important because of the general expectation that the Congress president would become the first head of the government of free India. Maulana Azad who had been made president of the Congress in 1937 after the resignation of Shri Subhash Chander Bose had continued to hold that post right through the war. A new president of the Congress had to be elected.

Most of the provincial units of the Congress recommended the name of Sardar Vallabh Bhai Patel, the seniormost Congress-leader after Gandhiji who commanded the confidence of all nationalists, including those outside the Congress. His election to the Congress presidency was therefore taken for granted.

But this was not liked by the British and left wing in the Congress. They wanted Pt. Jawahar Lal Nehru who, according to his own admission, was Muslim by culture, English by education and Hindu only by accident. Mahatma Gandhi who owed deep debt of gratitude to Pt. Moti Lal Nehru for his helping hand in bringing him on the top in the Congress now decided to repay the debt by putting his weight in favour of Jawahar Lal. Shri C. Rajagopalachari was also partly instrumental in persuading Gandhiji to back

Jawahar Lal. He has since publicly admitted that that was the greatest mistake of his life.

Sardar Vallabh Bhai Patel with all his realism and strength of character was too devoted to Gandhiji to say no to him. Gandhiji knew this. Like Daronacharya who demanded the thumb of Eklavya so that his favourite Arjun should have no rival in archery, Mahatma Gandhi demanded the withdrawal of Sardar Patel in favour of Nehru. Was it the proverbial partiality of the Hindu in Mahatma Gandhi for the high caste—Nehru was a Brahmin and Patel a Jat—or was it the weakness of Hindu character which impelled him to kick the friends and hug the enemies, is a matter of conjecture.

Elevation of Pt. Nehru to presidential gaddi over the head of his senior, Sardar Patel, was the first major shot in the politics of freedom rumblings of which began a year before the dawn of independence. With the passage of time, it is being increasingly realised that it was the gravest blunder of Mahatma Gandhi and a misfortune for India.

From vice-president of the interim cabinet to Prime Minister of free India was a natural development. On August 15, 1947 Pt. Jawahar Lal Nehru was sworn in as the first Prime Minister of free India. Sardar Patel became the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Home and States, Dr. Rajendra Prasad was made president of the Constituent Assembly and Shri C. Rajagopalachari was tipped to be the first head of the State after Mountbatten, who was accepted as Constitutional head of the State of free India for the time being.

With the formation of Pakistan all the Muslim members of the Constituent Assembly from the areas falling in Pakistan went away to Karachi. Some others like Ch. Khaliquzzaman of U.P., after toying some time with the idea of organising a Muslim League opposition of the remaining Muslim members, decamped to Pakistan to enjoy the fruits of matricide. The rest changed caps and became Congressmen overnight.

As a result the Constituent Assembly which also acted

as provisional parliament of India till the first general election held in January, 1952 had no opposition worth the name. Dr. B. R. Ambedkar and Dr. Shyama Prasad Mookerji who because of their status and stature could have effectively played the role of opposition were inducted into the first cabinet to give it a truly national colour. Dr. Ambedkar was also appointed Chairman of the drafting Committee to which was entrusted the work of preparing the draft of the Constitution to be placed before the Constituent Assembly.

It was only in April 1950 when Dr. Shyama Prasad Mookerji resigned from the Nehru cabinet because of differences in regard to policy towards Pakistan that the provisional parliament of India came to have a member sitting in the opposition.

This absence of opposition in the Constituent Assembly cum provisional parliament which was totally dominated by the Congress Party was not a happy augury for the Indian democracy. Till freedom Indian National Congress was more a movement than a party. It had developed an omnibus character which carried in it people with all sort of ideological colours and hues. It had a distinct leftist wing which had been functioning as Congress Socialist Party under the leadership of Jawahar Lal Nehru and J. P. Narain. As distinct from it, there was the general body of the Congress which could be described as right of the centre. Most of the top leaders of the Congress including Sardar Vallabh Bhai Patel, Shri C. Rajagopalachari, Dr. Rajendra Prasad, Shri K. M. Munshi belonged to this wing of the Congress. A sprinkling of Communalists—ex-Muslim Leaguers, Akalis, etc.—all fellow travellers could also be seen on this wide berth of the Indian National Congress.

All these diverse elements were kept together by Mahatma Gandhi with his stress at subordinating ideological and temperamental differences to one common goal of winning independence. But no one was more conscious of the ideological conflicts within the Congress and the need of at least two major parties to make Indian democracy run on sound lines. Therefore soon after the freedom he suggested

that the Indian National Congress be dissolved to enable two ideologically coherent political parties to emerge out of it.

To those who wanted to keep out of party and power politics and devote themselves to the service of the common people his suggestion was that they should constitute a "Lok Sewak Sangh" for the purpose. Presumably he thought that his own place would be in this "Sangh" when it was formed. Because this advice came from him just before his assassination, it has come to be considered as his last testament. It is a real irony of Indian Politics that this sound advice of Gandhiji which would have put Indian democracy on an even keel from its very inception was not heeded by his followers.

The one at fault in the matter was really Jawahar Lal Nehru. He had been talking of socialism ever since his pilgrimage of Soviet Union in the twenties. He was also the guiding spirit of the Congress Socialist Party which had been functioning within the Congress. It was clear to him as to other Socialists that the dominant section of the Congress led by Sardar Patel abhorred and detested the policy they advocated. Therefore a principled and honourable course for him was to leave the Congress along with his followers and lead the Congress Socialist Party as the main opposition to the Congress Party. But Pt. Nehru was a man with a power-oriented mind. His dominant passion was power. He was not prepared to allow ideological considerations to come in the way of his pursuit of power. He, therefore, abandoned his socialist friends who separated from the Congress to form Socialist Party of India and decided to remain perched on the Congress band-wagon driven by Sardar Patel. He thus set the pattern for politics of convenience and opportunism. No wonder therefore that many of the present day Indian politicians whose sole aim is to remain in positions of power somehow look upon Pt. Nehru as their model.

Having decided to pull together, both Pt. Nehru and Sardar Patel tried to avoid conflict by an attitude of non-interference in each other's domains. But as time passed Pt. Nehru began to assert his position as Prime Minister and

Sardar Patel began to feel restive with some of the policies of Pt. Nehru particularly those in regard to Pakistan and Kashmir. Things came to a head in 1950 when they openly came out on the opposite sides in the election to the Congress presidency. Convincing victory of Shri P. D. Tandon, the nominee of Sardar Patel, over Acharya J. B. Kriplani, the nominee of Pt. Nehru, confirmed Sardar Patel's ascendancy in the Congress organisation.

Pt. Nehru considered it to be a quit notice for him. He therefore began planning for a second string to his bow. The Kisan Mazdoor Praja Party (K.M.P.P.) which was formed soon after by the trusted lieutenants of Pt. Nehru like Shri Rafi Ahmed Kidwai was known to be the party of Pt. Nehru. He would have joined it if things became too hot for him in the Congress. But that was not to be.

Death of Sardar Patel in December 1950 changed the whole situation. Shri Tandon was forced to resign and Pt. Nehru became the president of the Congress. He thus became the head of the party and the government at the same time.

Exit of Sardar Patel from the earthly scene and the gutlessness shown by those in the Congress, who had so far stood with Sardar Patel, made the debut of a party close to Sardar Patel's line of thinking outside the Congress an imperative necessity. Bharatiya Jana Sangh which was founded by Dr. Shyama Prasad Mookerjee in October 1951 was meant to fulfil that need.

While these developments were taking place on the political plane, the work of constitution making went apace. Dr. Rajendra Prasad, the president of the Constituent Assembly, was a devoted Gandhite. From the point of view of integrity, intellectual brilliance and humility which goes with true knowledge he was head and shoulder above other Congress leaders. Ideologically he was nearer to Sardar Patel. His main aid in the Constituent Assembly was Dr. Bhim Rao Ambedkar, the law minister, in the first National Government. Dr. Ambedkar besides being the unquestioned leader of the scheduled castes was one of the clearest headed

political leaders of his time. Intellectually he was superb. His faith in democracy was beyond any doubt. As Chairman of the drafting committee he was the real architect of the constitution. Both Dr. Prasad and Dr. Ambedkar were not much interested in power politics and international recognition which always kept Pt. Nehru on his toes. Dr. Ambedkar in fact had a very poor opinion of Pt. Nehru. Both of them, however, had high respect for Sardar Patel whose burning patriotism, robust common sense and realism proved to be the greatest asset of free India in its most crucial and formative years.

The Constitution of India as it emerged out of the Constituent Assembly in November 1949 had unmistakable impress of Sardar Patel and Dr. Ambedkar on it. It is the largest written constitution in the world. Government of India Act of 1935 is its basis. It has drawn upon the constitutions of other democracies of the world as well. But the main source of inspiration and guidance for the makers of India's constitution was the British experience and the norms and conventions developed by the British during their long working of parliamentary democracy. The influence of the West European thought, particularly the French thought, on the constitution is also clearly visible in the preamble of the constitution which reads:—"We the people of India, having solemnly resolved to constitute India into a Sovereign Democratic Republic and to secure to all its citizens:

> Justice, social, economic and political;
> Liberty of thought, expression, belief, faith and worship.
> Equality of status and opportunity, and to promote among them all Fraternity assuring the dignity of the individual and unity of the nation,

in our Constituent Assembly in this twenty-sixth day of November 1949 do hereby adopt, enact and give to ourselves this constitution".

This constitution envisaged India to be a union of states. The term "Union" of India was drawn from the Soviet Constitution. It is not a happy word in the Indian context. Soviet

Union and U.S.A. are union of States which had nothing in common before they were bunched together by mutual consent in U.S.A. and by conquest in U.S.S.R. India on the other hand is an ancient and well defined country which has remained a distinct entity to the outside world even when it was divided into hundreds of States or Kingdoms. When India became free it had nine provinces of British India and over five hundred princely States. At the time of first general election held in 1952 India had 28 states divided into categories A, B and C according to powers they enjoyed. The reorganisation of states on the basis of the report of States Reorganisation Commission reduced their number to 14 in 1956. Today they number 19. This number may go up to 50 in foreseeable future. India therefore is not a union of states but a state which has been divided into a number of sub-states or provinces on consideration of administrative convenience and linguistic homogeneity. Needs of economic growth, historical tradition and not too happy experience of bigger states may lead to another reorganisation of Indian states which may swell their number to about fifty.

Though the use of the word "Union" was a concession to doctrinaire federalists, in actual content the constitution is only quasi-federal. It provided for an institutionally strong centre in which the residuary powers have been vested.

The Central Government envisaged in it was to consist of a President, a cabinet and a bicameral legislature—the Lok Sabha (House of the People) and Rajya Sabha (House of States). While it defined the powers and functions of all these organs in detail, it left some ambiguity in regard to the powers and functions of the president. The relevant article—Article 53(i)—reads: "The executive power of Union shall be vested in the president and shall be exercised by him either directly or through officers subordinate to him in accordance with this constitution".

The other connected Article 74(1) reads: "There shall be a council of Ministers with the Prime Minister at the head to aid and advise the president in the exercise of his functions". According to some legal pundits, the president of

To ensure that the elections to the legislatures are fair and free, provision has been made for the appointment of an Election Commission consisting of a Chief Election Commissioner and such number of other commissioners as the President may from time to time fix. To ensure independence of the Chief Election Commissioner it has been provided that "he shall not be removed from his office except in like manner and on the like grounds as a judge of the Supreme Court and the conditions of service of the Chief Election Commissioner shall not be varied to his disadvantage after his appointment".

Independence of judiciary, the third pillar of democracy, has been specifically provided for in the chapter on Judiciary. The apex of judiciary in India is the Supreme Court every judge of which is appointed by the President after consultation with "such of the judges of the Supreme Court or of the High Courts in the states as the President may deem it necessary for the purpose and shall hold office until he attains the age of sixty-five years". The constitution further provides that a judge of the Supreme Court shall not be removed from his office except by an order of the President passed after an address of each House of the Parliament supported by a majority of total membership of that House. The terms of service of a judge cannot be altered to his detriment after he has been once appointed. The same holds true in regard to the judges of the State high courts.

It is because of these specific provisions about fundamental rights, independence of Judiciary and Election Commission that the constitution of India is rightly considered to be a democratic constitution and the state run according to it has to be a democracy.

Adoption of this constitution was the first step towards creation of the democratic apparatus to run India as a parliamentary democracy. Preparation for elections to the State legislatures and parliament in accordance with the provisions of the constitution took more than a year and the first general elections under this constitution were held in January 1952.

CHAPTER IV

End of an Era

With the adoption and signing of the constitution of India stage was set for the emergence of India as the largest democracy of the world. Preparations were then begun for the holding of general elections in the country on the basis of the constitution. Mr. Sukumar Sen was appointed as Chief Election Commissioner and the work of preparing electoral rolls was started in right earnest. The political parties, old and new, also started preparing for the electoral battle.

The first general elections on the basis of universal adult franchise were held all over India in December-January 1951-52. It was an adventurous experiment in democracy unprecedented in magnitude in any part of the world.

It called upon an electorate of 176 million, most of it illiterate and poor, to elect 489 members for the Lok Sabha—House of the People—and 3,373 for the Vidhan Sabhas—State legislatures. There were 1,874 candidates for Lok Sabha and 15,361 for the Vidhan Sabhas, of which only 93 were returned unopposed: 10,59,44,495 persons, 51.15% of the total electorate, cast their votes.

The whole election campaign was conducted in a generally peaceful and orderly way to the great satisfaction of all democrats and dismay of sceptics who had been asserting that India was not fit for democracy.

There were in all 77 parties which took part in the elections out of which 14 were recognised as all India parties by

the Election Commission. Of the rest 39 were recognised as state parties.

Among the all India parties only five, the Indian National Congress, the Communist Party of India, The Hindu Maha Sabha, The Scheduled Caste Federation and The Socialist Party had their origin in Pre-independence period. The remaining three—the K.M.P.P., the Ram Rajya Parishad and the Jana Sangh—had come into existence just after the adoption of the constitution. The Jana Sangh was the youngest of them.

The Indian National Congress which was now headed by Pt. Jawahar Lal Nehru who also headed the government had a natural advantage over other parties in a country where worship of the rising sun is an old and deep rooted tradition. It put up the largest number of candidates—479 for Lok Sabha and 3,205 for Vidhan Sabhas—of which it won 364 and 2,247, i.e., 74.43% and 68.56% of the total seats respectively. But in terms of votes secured, its position was not so good. It got only 45.1% of the total votes polled for Lok Sabha and 42.43% of those polled for Vidhan Sabhas. This wide disparity between votes polled and the seats won was mainly due to the split of anti-Congress votes among a large number of parties and candidates. In a large number of constituencies the votes polled by successful Congress candidates came to only a fraction of the total votes polled by other candidates.

Analysis of this minority vote on the basis of which Congress won steam-roller majorities in the Parliament and State Assemblies revealed that a good percentage of it came to it because of illiteracy and ignorance of the voters who knew of no other party and for whom the Congress symbol of pair of bullocks had a sentimental appeal. The Muslim voters voted for Congress en bloc and a majority of votes of other minority groups and scheduled castes also went to it. The use of money power was another factor in its favour. Of the conscious and educated voters, the share of the Congress was much below its expectations.

Counting of votes took place a long time after the pol-

ling. There were reports that this time was used for changing or tampering the ballot boxes in favour of the ruling Congress party. There was therefore some truth in the remark made by late Dr. Shyama Prasad Mookerji in the parliament that Congress Party had swept not the polls but the ballot boxes.

This sweeping victory of the Congress Party, whatever the factors responsible for it, further strengthened the position of Pt. Nehru. As party president he had distributed the Congress tickets and as Prime Minister he had tremendous power and patronage at his command. After the death of Sardar Patel, there was nobody left in the Congress who could stand up to him. Shri C. Rajagopalachari and Dr. Rajendra Prasad were the only two other Congress leaders who had status and stature because of their seniority in age and past record of service. C.R. had been instrumental in the rise of Pt. Nehru to power. He was also the successor of Lord Mountbatten as the first Indian Governor-General of India. After the adoption of the constitution he was expected to be elected as the first President of the Indian Republic. He was Pt. Nehru's choice. But as large majority of Congress members preferred Dr. Rajendra Prasad, Pt. Nehru submitted to their wishes.

Dr. Rajendra Prasad with all his qualities of head and heart was too meek and good to be a match for Pt. Nehru. As a result Pt. Nehru began to outshine and outdistance him from the very start. The office of the President of India thus got de-valued from the very beginning. It further strengthened the position of Pt. Nehru who became the master of all that he surveyed in the government and the party. He maintained this position more or less up to his death on May 27, 1964. It is difficult to say what would have been the position of C.R. had he become the first President. Probably he would not have played second fiddle to Pt. Nehru so meekly as Dr. Rajendra Prasad did.

The only possible check on the absolute power that thus came into the hands of Pt. Nehru was the opposition in the parliament. The numerical weakness and divisions in

the opposition ranks reduced the effectiveness of this check considerably. Furthermore none of the front rank leaders of the opposition parties except Dr. Shyama Prasad Mookerji could get elected. The Socialist and K.M.P.P. parties which had the advantage of known leadership with long standing in public life could get only 12 and 10 seats in the Lok Sabha. The Jana Sangh could get only three, two from West Bengal including Dr. Shyama Prasad Mookerji and one from Madhya Bharat. The two seats from West Bengal were entirely due to personal influence of Dr. Mookerji. The third Jana Sangh member, U.S. Trivedi, who won from Neemuch after defeating the provincial Congress president, also won mainly because of his personal popularity and standing. The Communist Party of India did better than expected. It won 26 seats in Lok Sabha and thus became the single largest group in the opposition.

Because of ideological affinity and personal regard for Pt. Nehru who was virtually the founder of both the Socialist Party and the K.M.P.P., the opposition of these two parties to Pt. Nehru inside and outside the parliament was negligible. The Communist Party had little faith in constitutional and parliamentary methods. Ideologically it considered Pt. Nehru to be close to it. Pt. Nehru too had a soft corner for it. Throughout the election campaign he reserved all his fire for the Jana Sangh which was still then a non-entity and spared the Communist Party. That impelled the well known political commentator, "Insaf", to write in the Hindustan Times, Delhi, of January 30, 1952: "Perhaps the communists would not have such a good start if Nehru had not wasted his energy fighting Shadows".

Perhaps Pt. Nehru knew better. It was not Jana Sangh as such but its founder leader, Dr. Shyama Prasad Mookerji, who worried him. Dr. Mookerji, though much younger to Nehru in years, was more than a match for him in his record of service, versatile intellect, administrative experience, oratory and parliamentary skill. Pt. Nehru instinctively realised that he was his rival and potential alternative Prime Minister before the country.

Dr. Mookerji on his part was quite confident of his capacity to face Pt. Nehru and out-smart him. He never made any secret of his misgivings about the unbridled power of Pt. Nehru. "When I scan the whole course of Indian history", he once said, "I do not find a single man who has done greater harm to India than Pt. Nehru". He was therefore determined to "set Pt. Nehru right". To that end the decided to bring the non-socialist opposition groups under one banner. National Democratic Party that was formed under his leadership soon stole the thunder from the Communist Party and began to function as the main opposition group in the parliament. Its greatest asset, besides the numerical strength of over twenty, was the personality of Dr. Mookerji who came to be implicitly accepted as leader of the opposition in the parliament by both sides of the House.

The frontal attacks of Dr. Mookerji on Pt. Nehru who was invariably worsted at his hands because of his superior parliamentary skill and his strategy of making Pt. Nehru lose his temper, raised his stock so high that even Praja Socialist Party, which was formed by the merger of K.M.P.P. and Socialist Party, offered to join his National Democratic Party in the parliament provided he excluded Hindu Maha Sabha from it. Dr. Mookerji would not agree to this proposition. He wanted a minimum common programme to be drawn up and to carry with him all those groups which subscribed to it. He was not prepared to follow a touch me not policy towards Hindu Maha Sabha simply because it was "Hindu". Had he lived longer the nationalist and democratic opposition parties would have polarised under his banner which would have given new strength and vigour to Indian democracy.

But that was not to be. The way he was allowed to enter Jammu & Kashmir State after first refusing him permit to enter that state and the way he was arrested inside that state which was till then outside the jurisdiction of the Supreme Court of India and the way he died in mysterious circumstance in Srinagar Jail created serious doubts about

the real cause of his death which was not natural. The wrong statement of Pt. Nehru in the Lok Sabha about the last minute change in the earlier decision of the government to arrest him at Gurdaspur to prevent him from entering Jammu & Kashmir State and his persistent refusal to order a judicial enquiry into the circumstances of his death in detention in spite of the fact that this demand was made by all sections, including top leaders of the Congress Party, created strong doubts that Sh. Abdullah might have had the blessings of some high-ups in Delhi in removing that thorn for all time. With the passage of time, those doubts are getting stuck on the public mind.

Dr. Mookerji's death was a grievous blow to nascent Indian democracy, and a slur on the government of free India.

The comment of late Dr. M. R. Jaykar, the great jurist and Privy Councillor, on the incident in this context is as poignant as it is significant. He said, "To die in a prison house, locked there by his country's Swadeshi Government, by persons with whom he shared power as a colleague, is a fitting termination of a warring life. Let us hope that this incident will make the Government of India realise in their self-complacent enjoyment of the chits of American visitors, the enormity of their behaviour which ignored all the canons of fairness and justice accepted by civilised governments".

With Dr. Mookerji removed from his path, there was none in the parliament or outside to deal with Pt. Nehru as an equal. Almost all the leaders of opposition tried to spare Nehru and reserved all their attacks for the Congress Party as such as if Nehru was not Congress. The fact however was that Congress was nothing but Nehru. It was this idolatrous attitude of the opposition leaders verging on psychophancy which impelled late Dr. B. R. Ambedkar to remark:

"Those who attack the Congress and spare Nehru are fools. They do not know A.B.C. of politics. As things are there are many good and honest men in the Congress. But they are not allowed to come up by Pt. Nehru whose only

passion is power. He may sell India to Soviet Union to remain in power".

These remarks of Dr. Ambedkar may appear to be too strong and pungent. But coming as they do from a man who had worked with Pt. Nehru as his colleague in the cabinet for many years, deserve consideration in any objective assessment of Pt. Nehru.

But such remarks and warnings remained cries in the wilderness. Things came to such a pass that any criticism of Pt. Nehru began to be treated us sacrilege. The writer realised it when some senior members of Parliament took strong objection to his retort to Pt. Nehru in the Lok Sabha in 1961: "if you cannot get rid of your ideas about peace at any price, you can at least get rid of your office."

Bhartiya Jana Sangh of which Nehru was the bitterest critic and opponent almost came to the verge of a split in 1962 on the question of attitude towards Pt. Nehru. Dominant section of its leadership wanted to put a blanket ban on any criticism of Pt. Nehru. The situation was saved by the intervention of late Dr. Raghuvir who chided Jana Sangh leaders on quarrelling about their attitude towards a person who was the sworn enemy of the Jana Sangh.

Pt. Nehru would have been a better person if this absolute power and atmosphere of idolatry and flattery inside and outside the parliament had not gone to his head.

Most important other development between the first and the second general elections which were held in February-March 1957 was the growth of C.P.I., P.S.P. and the Jana Sangh as the recognised major parties besides the Congress. They were first given this recognition by the Election Commission on the basis of the votes polled by them in 1952 elections. This gave them an advantage over other opposition parties which began to gravitate towards these three parties.

Popular interest in the second general elections centred mainly round these four parties. All India Socialist Party of Dr. Ram Manohar Lohia which grew out of P.S.P. just

before the election was the only other party which made a serious bid for recognition as an all India party in this election.

The total number of voters in 1957 elections was over 193 million, about 20 million more than the total electorate in 1952. The Election Commission having profited by the experience gained in 1952 elections made good many improvements in procedure and arrangements which enabled it to complete the entire election within a month and a half. Improvements were also made in ballot boxes and steps were taken to have the votes counted as early as possible after the polling was over in a constituency. This reduced the chances of and complaints about tampering with ballot boxes and other electoral malpractices and helped in creating confidence in the voters and political parties about the fairness of the elections.

The results of 1957 elections followed the pattern of 1952. Congress Party improved its overall position in Lok Sabha from 364 to 371. It also registered a slight increase in its Lok Sabha vote which rose from 45% in 1952 to 47.78% of the total polled vote. It did not do so well in the States. In Kerala it was decisively defeated by the Communist Party and in Orissa the local Gantantra Parishad captured 51 seats as against its 56 in a house of 140.

The Communist Party in spite of more favourable atmosphere for it because of growing power and prestige of U.S.S.R. and communist China and adoption of some of its slogans about socialism by the Congress Party secured 27 seats, only one more than what it had got in 1952. The P.S.P. got 19 seat, three less than the combined total of 22 won by the K.M.P.P. and Socialist Party, the two components of P.S.P. in 1952.

The Jana Sangh improved its position in Lok Sabha from 3 to 4, two of its seats came from Maharashtra out of the quota allotted to it as a partner of Samyukta Maharashtra Samiti. But in view of the setback that Jana Sangh had got by the death of Dr. Mookerji in 1953 and resignation of some of its senior members soon after, it was a matter of

satisfaction for it that it did register a slight advance. Its record in state assembly elections was better.

The sweeping victory of the Congress further strengthened the position of Pt. Jawahar Lal Nehru in the party and the government. He ascribed it partly to the socialistic orientation of the Congress and adoption of socialist slogans by it which created confusion in the ranks of the socialist opposition. But a close analysis of the seats won and votes polled by the Congress and the two Socialist Parties—the P.S.P. and S.P. of Dr. Lohia—does not warrant such a conclusion. After the election of 1957 the shift of the Congress party under Pt. Nehru's leadership towards socialism and statism inherent in it became quite marked. Even though Congress had officially adopted the creed of socialism at Avadi long before 1957 elections, it was only at its plenary session held at Nagpur in January 1959 that it decided to take concrete steps towards implementation of socialist programme. Resolutions about ceilings on land holdings and cooperative farming were adopted there on the insistence of Pt. Nehru.

This created sharp reaction in a number of senior Congress leaders including Shri C. Rajagopalachari, Prof. N. G. Ranga, then Secretary of the Congress parliamentary party, Shri K. M. Munshi and Ch. Charan Singh. C.R. publicly asked Pt. Nehru in an article published in **Hindustan Times** of January 26, 1959, "Has land been ever put under cooperative cultivation anywhere—anywhere except in countries where private personal property is absent and forced labour is commandeered under communist regimes?"

Pt. Nehru reacted equally strongly to this opposition to his socialistic policies from within the party. Speaking to the Congress parliamentary party on February 24, 1959 he was reported to have said, "Hitherto most of those opposed to that ideal thought that the Congress was only talking of socialism in theory. Consequently they were not vociferous in their condemnation of the Avadi resolution. But after the passing of the Nagpur resolution, they have realised that the *Congress meant business. These interests have now become* more vocal in their opposition". Reverting to the same

subject he told the Congress parliamentary party on March 14, 1959 that those who did not believe in the Nagpur resolution on cooperative farming were welcome to leave the Congress organisation. "I do not mind", he said, "if the Congress splits on this issue, if some people want to leave the organisation. I do not mind that either for we will know where we are."

This stiff attitude towards the critics of socialist and statist policies within the Congress was accompanied by an olive branch for the socialists outside the Congress. Mrs. Indira Feroze Gandhi, the only daughter of Pt. Nehru, who was a step ahead of her father in her drawing room protestations for socialism and who was nominated to the presidential gaddi of the Congress in the first serious bid to groom her for succession to the throne, made a public appeal to them to cooperate with the Congress in the implementation of its socialist policies.

The first to respond to this appeal was the Communist Party of India. Shri Ajoy Ghosh, the General Secretary of C.P.I., welcomed this move and offered to cooperate with the Congress in the implementation of not only Nagpur decisions but also other "progressive" policies that it may adopt. "What made cooperation of this nature urgent", said Shri Ghosh, "was the attempt by reactionary elements to sabotage all progressive measures. This attempt must be defeated. There are right wing forces in the Congress and whatever good the party attempted to do was nullified by them".[1] The Central executive of the C.P.I. ratified this stand of its general secretary. Talking again on the same subject on March 8, 1959 Shri Ghosh said, "collaboration between all progressive parties was necessary as the Congress alone was not in a position to carry out these policies."

This response of the C.P.I. was in keeping with the new communist line. The C.P.I. and its Russian mentors were fully aware of the strength and weakness of the Congress. They had come to the conclusion that in Pt. Nehru they had

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1. *Hindustan Times*, Feb. 25, 1959.

their best friend in the Congress. They were also conscious of the strength of the right wing in the Congress. So they decided to ingratiate themselves with Pt. Nehru and his socialist supporters to drive a wedge between them and the so-called rightists in the Congress. The C.P.I. had also become conscious of its own weakness. With all its vast resources, foreign patronage, large army of paid workers and a friendly Nehru, it was not making much progress because it was not rooted in the Indian soil. Its ideology was foreign and its faith in violent and coercive methods was repugnant to the Indian temperament. It therefore decided to overcome this weakness by riding the band-wagon of Pt. Nehru. Nehruite Congressmen then thought that they had taken the wind out of communist sails by taking to socialism and co-operative farming. The communists on their part saw these developments as a success for the policies and outlook advocated by them and they began to look forward to the day when the Congress will be purged of its "reactionary" elements and will become the instrument of communist revolution in India. This assessment of the communist designs and plans made by the writer in his book "Political Trends in India" written in 1959 has been fully borne out by the developments following Shri V.V. Giri's election as President of India in 1969.

This steady drift of the Congress towards leftism and statism created consternation in the liberal circles within and outside the Congress. The need to arrest this trend by building a strong opposition party wedded to nationalism, democracy and Jana Kalyan began to be felt. Jana Sangh could have fulfilled this need. But since the death of Dr. Shyama Prasad Mookerji it had lost rapport with like-minded people outside the circle of influence of the Rashtriya Swayam Sewak Sangh. As a result the systematic smear campaign of Pt. Nehru and his communist allies against the Jana Sangh had created misgivings about its character even among those who agreed with its broad approach to national problems. They therefore decided to float a new party in 1959. It was named Swatantra Party. Shri C. Rajagopalachari became

its patron-saint, and Prof. N. G. Ranga was elected its first president. But the real brain and force behind it was Shri M. R. Masani, an erstwhile colleague of Pt. Nehru in the Congress Socialist Party whose liberalism could not brook statism in the name of socialism.

The rise of Swatantra Party created a platform in the country to educate and mobilise public opinion against the growing influence of communists and Soviet Union on the internal and external policies of India and the dangers to Indian democracy inherent in it.

Another development that took place about the same time helped to create this consciousness in the public. It was the flight of Dalai Lama from Tibet to India and the aggressive postures adopted by Communist China towards India. This was the logical sequel of the policy of Pt. Nehru towards China on the question of Tibet.

Tibet had existed as a distinct and independent country for thousands of years before Communist China decided to incorporate it by force in the Chinese empire in 1950. Treaty commitments and vital Indian interests demanded that India should stand by Tibet. But instead of doing that, Pt. Nehru signed a treaty with China, the so-called Panch Sheel Treaty of 1954, under which it recognised Tibet to be a part of China.

This treaty converted the Indo-Tibet frontier into Indo-China frontier and opened the flood-gates of Chinese claims on Indian territory. Pt. Nehru who claimed to be an expert on international relations was so ignorant about the practical aspects of foreign policy that he did not secure any commitment from China in regard to Macmahon Line, the traditional water shed frontier between Tibet and India. Later when China began to nibble at Indian territory, he said that he had talked to the Chinese premier, Mr. Chou-en-lai, about Macmahon line at the time of the signing of the treaty of 1954 and that Mr. Chou-en-lai had promised to respect it. But Mr. Chou-en-lai publicly rejected this claim of Pt. Nehru. In the absence of any written record or commitment, the Chinese version cannot be refuted and the entire

northern frontier of India has since become a disputed frontier so far as China is concerned.

The Chinese aggressiveness in the wake of Dalai Lama's flight into India forced the government to take the parliament, which had been kept in dark about development on the Northern frontier for keeping up the Hindi-Chini Bhai Bhai euphoria, in confidence about the Chinese incursions into Indian territory since May 1954. The shooting down of an Indian army patrol by the Chinese in the Akasai Chin area of Ladakh also brought to light the fact that China had built a road through this part of Indian territory to link Tibet with Sinkiang.

These revelations created consternation and strong resentment against Communist Chinese duplicity and bad faith in the whole country. Pt. Nehru attempted to minimise the gravity of the situation by describing the frontier between Ladakh and Tibet as undefined and his comment that not a blade of grass grew in the area occupied by China further aggravated the situation. This put both Pt. Nehru and the Communist Party in the dock and a strong anti-Communist feeling began to sweep the country.

The P.S.P. which had been most upset over the growing influence of communists over Pt. Nehru was most vociferous in its protests against communist duplicity and Chinese expansionism.

The third general elections were held in February-March 1962 in this atmosphere of growing Communist influence on Pt. Nehru and his policies on the one hand and growing anti-communist feeling in the country on the other.

The elections were held under the new system of marking the voters preference by crossing the name or the symbol of the candidate of his choice on a common ballot paper for all the candidates. As a result there was to be one ballot box for all the candidates and the possibility of "sweeping" the ballot boxes was obviated. As such it was considered to be an improvement on the old system. But no one at that time thought that this system could open the way for rigging of elections on a huge scale by any unscrupulous leadership.

The results of the third general elections followed the pattern of the first two general elections so far as the Congress party was concerned. It captured 361 seats—ten less than what it had got in 1957—in the Lok Sabha with a slight reduction in the total votes polled by it. The C.P.I. captured 29 seats, which showed that it had failed to grow and was simply marking time. The P.S.P. strength was reduced to 12 but Lohia Socialists registered an improvement. The Jana Sangh increased its strength to 14 from five and the Swatantra Party made its first entry into the Lok Sabha with 18 members.

In spite of the improvement in non-Socialist votes and strength in the Lok Sabha, the fact remained that the Indian National Congress under the sole leadership of Pt. Nehru had romped back to power. Pt. Nehru considered it to be his personal victory. It marked the climax of his power and hold on the Congress Party and the country. Anti-climax began soon after.

Pt. Nehru thought that the success of Jana Sangh and Swatantra Party was mainly due to general resentment against the failure of his government to check Chinese expansionism at the cost of Indian territory. He therefore decided to get tough with China. To dramatise the new policy, General B.M. Kaul, a relation of Pt. Nehru, whom he wanted to groom as the future C.-in-C. of the Indian army, was given the special charge of the North Eastern frontier with instructions to push back the Chinese intruders.

But Indian army which had always been told that Chinese were friends and that the danger to Indian security was from the West (Pakistan) and not from North (China) was not psychologically and physically in a position for effective implementation of this policy. It was ill-clad, ill-trained and ill-equipped for the mountain-warfare on snowy heights. China on the other hand with the advantage of a rear base in Tibet just below the Himalayan passes had been preparing for a push into Indian territory for a long time. That push began on October 20, 1962 with a large-scale invasion of the Chinese army all along the North Eastern and Ladakh frontier.

The retreat of the world famous Indian army before the Chinese advance came as a shock to Pt. Nehru and the people of India alike. Pt. Nehru who had deluded himself and the country that the Socialist China was a peace loving country and there could be no danger of aggression from it now bemoaned that "we had been living in an artificial world of our own imagination".

When the writer met him in his office on October 25 he presented a pitiable picture of a frustrated and demoralised person. He explained that the retreat of Indian army was due to superior equipment of the Chinese army. Indian army till then was equipped with obsolete .303 rifles and mortars used in the Second World War.

When told about the public demand for removal of Shri Krishna Menon, the defence minister, from his cabinet, Pt. Nehru tried to shield him. He was not prepared to part company with Mr. Menon who had been his main foreign policy adviser for many years.

But the people and even his own party men were in no mood to submit to his whims at that time of national crisis. While the air outside the Parliament and Tin Murti House, the official residence of Pt. Nehru, was rent by full throated slogans like:

> "We are one in the defence of the country".
> "Ban the treacherous Communist Party".
> "Dismiss Krishna Menon"

within the Parliament House Congress Parliamentary Party itself demanded resignation of Krishna Menon. Shri Mahavir Tyagi, a senior member of the Congress Party, went to the extent of writing to Pt. Nehru that if he failed to dismiss Krishna Menon, the party will have to demand his resignation. At the same time the President Dr. Radhakrishnan began to seriously consider the declaration of a state of emergency in the terms of the constitution which would have enabled him to suspend the cabinet and take all power in his own hands.

This situation upset both Pt. Nehru and his communist

friends. He was not the man to risk his own position for the sake of Krishna Menon. Krishna Menon, therefore, submitted his resignation which was promptly accepted. This was the first real defeat of Pt. Nehru since he had come to power.

While these developments were taking place, the Chinese advance continued in full force in the North East. This situation forced Pt. Nehru to approach western countries particularly U.S.A. and U.K. for effective military help. Preparation also began for sending him out of Tin Murti House and give a new leadership to the country.

This upset the communists in India and their Russian and Chinese mentors alike. The situation was saved by the unilateral cease-fire ordered by communist China on November 20, 1962.

The main motives behind this dramatic move of Communist China according to some knowledgeable sources were:

1. To save Pt. Nehru's gaddi who was still the most useful ally of the communists in India.

2. To save the Chinese army which would have been locked in India to be annihilated at leisure by the Indian army backed by U.S.A. and U.K. after the closure of the Himalayan passes by snow.

3. To prevent U.S.A. and U.K. coming in a big way into India.

But perhaps the most important cause of this sudden cease-fire was that the Chinese had achieved their aim of destroying the image of India and could afford to wait till political atmosphere in India became favourable for its Indian agents. "Military advance must keep pace with political advance" is the well-known Mao doctrine. Political atmosphere in India in 1962 was not favourable for communists. All their top leaders had gone into hiding and Communism had beat a hasty retreat before the rising tide of Indian nationalism. The situation could be improved only with the help of Pt. Nehru. Therefore the sudden cease-fire as much served the interests of China and communists as the sudden and successful military thrust a month earlier.

The right and dignified course for Pt. Nehru then was to resign and pave way for the rise of new leadership under his supervision and guidance. That would have raised his stature and made his place in history secure.

But that would have disproved Dr. Ambedkar's assessment that dominant passion with Pt. Nehru was power and that he would go to any length to retain it. Pt. Nehru wanted to remain in power at any cost. One reason for it was that he wanted to prepare the ground for his daughter to succeed him, if not immediately, then perhaps later.

Chinese invasion killed Pt. Nehru politically. The physical end came a year and a half later through an ailment which was kept a close secret from the people. His doctors had advised him after his physical ailment first became public at Bhuvneshwar in early 1963 that he should retire to some secluded place if he wanted to live for some time more. But he would not agree to that.

The end came on May 27, 1964. As he lay dead in his bed-room, the writer who was among the first few to reach his residence could not resist shedding a few tears for the man who had stalked the Indian stage like a colossus for seventeen long years. It was the end of an era.

True judgment of history about any person can come only after a generation when he can be judged purely on the basis of his real achievements without any emotional or ideological attachment or aversion. That time has not yet come. But one thing is clear. Few persons in the history of the world have enjoyed as much popularity, power, and patronage as Pt. Nehru did. Few people in the history had as much opportunity to rebuild a country and a nation which was prepared like the clay in the hands of a potter to be moulded into any shape or form. And there are still fewer examples in history of a man who wasted that opportunity as Pt. Nehru did.

From the point of view of democracy Pt. Nehru's greatest contribution for which his memory will be cherished by every democrat was that he gave respect to democratic institutions and kept the structure of democracy alive when

he was in a position to destroy them if he so wanted. Even though he was an aristocrat with a feudal and autocratic bend of mind, he nourished the plant of democracy in India by showing due respect to fundamental rights, particularly to freedom of thought and expression, and by preserving the independence of judiciary and sanctity and fairness of elections. He respected parliament and used to spend long hours sitting in its either House. He himself observed the parliamentary decorum and norms and wanted his party members to do the same. Even though ideologically he was very much inclined towards communism, he was consistent in opposing the communist methods of violence to implement that ideology.

He could have served Indian democracy better if he had used his position and power to set right conventions which are as important if not more as the written constitution. But there he failed. May be this was due to the fact that because of his supremacy over the party, which ran almost all the State governments as well, the problems that arose were tackled on personal or party level and not on the basis of the constitution. In fact constitution had little role to play during his era.

In the absence of strong and effective opposition, even the question of strict observance of democratic norms and conventions also seldom arose. For example, the Congress leadership started securing defection of opposition members to the ruling party after the very first general election even though such defections were not needed by it because of its overwhelming majorities. The opposition also did not take notice of such defections because they made little difference to either side. Only the defectors could make some personal gains. But the tradition of defections that began during the Nehru era later became a major danger to Indian democracy.

On the whole it can be said that Pt. Nehru in his personal conduct towards parliament and the opposition tried to live and behave as a democrat. Thereby he gave respectability to democracy and democratic institutions in the country.

CHAPTER V

A Gush of Realism

The question of choosing a successor of Pt. Jawahar Lal Nehru as Prime Minister of India was the first real test of Indian democracy. Removal of second line of leadership from the positions of power through the Kamraj Plan and studied silence of Pt. Nehru regarding his preference had created a fluid and delicate situation in which no one person could claim general acceptance by the ruling Congress Party.

Realising the gravity and delicacy of the situation, the President Dr. S. Radhakrishnan immediately nominated Shri G. L. Nanda, the seniormost minister in the cabinet after the exit of Morarji Desai and S. K. Patil under the Kamraj plan, to be the Prime Minister till a new leader was chosen by the Congress parliamentary party.

Later revelations and developments have made it clear that Pt. Nehru wanted his daughter Mrs. Indira Gandhi to succeed him. His will, in which he referred to her as Indira Nehru-Gandhi, also gave some indication of his mind. It is very unusual in India for a married lady to bear the family name of her parents. To call her Nehru was wrong under both the Hindu and Parsi usage and custom. Since Mr. Feroze Gandhi was a Parsi, Mrs. Indira Feroze Gandhi should have ceased to be Brahmin and Nehru after her marriage with him.

But Mrs. Gandhi at that time was not a member of Parliament and the people in general had never considered her as a likely successor to Pt. Nehru as Prime Minister

of the country. She was, therefore, not in the run. Her name was suggested at one stage by Pt. D. P. Mishra but nobody took him seriously.

The real contest lay only between Shri Morarji Desai and Shri Lal Bahadur Shastri. From the point of view of seniority and experience, Shri Desai appeared to be the obvious choice. Had he not gone out of the cabinet under the Kamraj plan, he would have been the seniormost minister in the cabinet and would have been sworn in as a matter of course. That exactly was the main reason for easing him out of the cabinet under the Kamraj plan.

The Congress President and other senior leaders of the Congress including S. K. Patil, Atulya Ghosh and Sanjiva Reddy did not like Shri Morarji because they considered him to be too rigid, dogmatic and headstrong to be comfortable for them. Some of his admirers too were lukewarm about him for the same reasons.

Lal Bahadur Shastri on the other hand had the reputation of being a meek and pliable person. He was, therefore, more acceptable to the old guard of the party which first came to be described as 'syndicate' during this period. His induction into the cabinet after the exit of Morarji Desai as minister without portfolio created the impression that he was the choice of Pt. Nehru as well. This gave him an edge over Morarji Desai.

After a majority of the members of the Congress Parliamentary party had indicated their preference for Lal Bahadur Shastri in a secret ballot, he was chosen leader of the party and new Prime Minister by general acclaim.

Shri Lal Bahadur was the first Prime Minister of India who had been thus democratically elected leader of the majority party. Pt. Nehru had never contested. He got the Prime Ministership as a gift from Mahatma Gandhi, who persuaded Sardar Patel, who was the choice of the majority of the Congress Party, to withdraw in his favour.

This choice of the new Prime Minister in a peaceful, orderly and democratic way disappointed the prophets of

doom who thought that India was unfit for democracy, and created a new admiration and respect for Indian democracy in the democratic world.

Shri Shastri's election was a victory for Indian democracy in another way as well. Shri Shastri was a scion of a very poor Kayasth (non-Brahmin) family of a village near Varanasi in Uttar Pradesh. He had worked his way up through the hard way. He was a graduate in Sanskrit and Hindi. English education and western culture had little influence and impact on him. He was therefore a man of the masses and not an aristocratic and feudal lord like Pt. Nehru whom the masses could see and worship from a distance but with whom they had nothing in common. It was this socio-cultural and economic background of Shri Shastri which earned him the title of being the first really Indian Prime Minister of India.

Shri Shastri had begun his public life as a member of the Arya Samaj and Servants of the People Society founded by Lala Lajpat Rai. As such he belonged to the Tilak School of politics which was characterised by a strong sense of nationalism and realism. His personal life was pure and his integrity above board. He was fully aware of the woes and miseries of the common people and shared their urges and aspirations. Therefore, Indian democracy gained added weight and prestige by his elevation to the office of Prime Minister.

It did not take long for Shri Shastri to make his impact on the government and administration. With all his humility and unassuming nature, he had a mind of his own. He persuaded Shri Morarji Desai to accept the Chairmanship of Administrative Reforms Commission which was set up to study the administrative apparatus of the Central Government and suggest the lines of reform and improvement in it. This was a master stroke. Morarji Desai with his characteristic devotion to any work entrusted to him got absorbed in this important task freeing Shri Shastri from the worry of dealing and adjusting with the only person in his party who could have created some headache for him. He also gave

a berth to Mrs. Gandhi in his cabinet as minister for Information and Broadcasting.

He had a clear and practical grasp of the social and economic problems facing the common people in India and had a line of action different from the doctrinaire socialistic approach of Pt. Nehru and his Communist friends to tackle them. In foreign policy too his approach was different. He attached greater importance to improvement in relations and forging of closer ties with the countries of *South East Asia, particularly the neighbouring countries* like Nepal, Shri Lanka, Burma, Thailand and Afghanistan than the countries of middle east and distant west which had been the main obsession of Pt. Nehru.

He had no ideological or emotional affinity with the Indian Communists or their foreign mentors. He was Indian first and last in his inspiration, education, outlook and culture. He was not an egoist but would not allow his self-respect to be compromised at any cost. His refusal to visit U.S.A. after an earlier programme of his visit to that country was not adhered to by the government of that country and his insistence on sticking to his Indian dress even in the cold of Tashkent brought out an aspect of his character which served as a great corrective to the kow-towing mentality of the Indian leadership and bureaucracy in their dealings with the U.S.A., the U.S.S.R. and other western powers.

While all this earned admiration and respect for him in the hearts of all nationalists in the country, the ultra westernised bureaucrats and the communists became restive. *They began to smell danger from that "small" man to their* way of life, vested interests and entrenched position in the country's administration and politics.

At the same time Shri Shastri began to pay greater attention to the susceptibilities and views of his colleagues as also of his political opponents inside and outside parliament. This helped in the growth of collective leadership in the government and a sense of participation in the Opposition.

But before Shri Shastri could give concrete formulation

to his new approach, his attention was diverted by new aggressive postures and plans of Pakistan which kept him fully occupied till the end of his life.

Pakistan had achieved a superiority in arms over India over the years when American military aid worth billions of dollars was dumped in that country as an advance base and arsenal against Soviet and Chinese Communist expansionism. But Pakistan had little interest in containment of Russia or China. Her only obsession was India. She had been stockpiling American arms only to be used against India at the opportune time.

Indian leadership was blissfully ignorant or complacent about these Pak preparations and intentions. Pt. Nehru in his desire for a place in history as a second Ashoka had neglected his primary duty to provide for effective security of the country against any foreign adventure till the Chinese invasion of 1962, as he himself confessed.

The Chinese invasion, in a way, proved to be a blessing in disguise in so far as it opened the eyes of Indian leadership to the needs of national defence. The limited military aid from the U.S.A. and U.K. in the face of Chinese invasion was followed up by a massive effort on India's own part to improve the defence potential of the country. The steep rise in the defence budget and other steps taken by the government had the desired effect on the strength and morale of the defence forces.

This upset Pakistan which felt that it would be losing its superiority in arms over India. It was therefore the assessment of all competent students of defence and foreign affairs that Pakistan, which could now count on China also as a friend and ally, would strike against India and secure control over Kashmir by force before military balance between Pakistan and India was fully restored. Her only worry was the attitude of U.S.A. if the arms given to her for use against Communist aggression were used against India. She was also conscious of the realistic outlook of the new Indian leadership and wanted to strike before it could dig its heels.

It was to get an idea of American reaction and Indian preparedness that Pak President, General Ayub, launched unprovoked aggression in Kutch area in March 1965. The Government of India was completely taken by surprise by this move. There was no territorial dispute about Kutch between India and Pakistan. Pak decision to strike in that arid and marshy area, therefore, was quite intriguing. Before India could recover from the first shock and think of a counter attack on ground of its own choice, British Prime Minister stepped in as an "honest broker", and a cease-fire was ordered.

It was followed by a summit meeting between Shri Shastri and General Ayub at London on the occasion of Commonwealth Prime Ministers conference in June 1965, where it was decided through the mediation of the British Prime Minister to restore the status quo ante position in Kutch and refer the dispute raked up by Pakistan to an international tribunal.

But just after the signing of this agreement, General Ayub while addressing the Pakistani students in London openly admitted that Kutch action was only a probing action and that Pakistani tanks could have a stroll up to Delhi.

In response to Indian complaint to U.S.A. about the use of arms supplied by her to Pakistan against India, the American Government lodged a verbal protest with President Ayub who dismissed it by saying that it was not possible for him to be choosy in the use of arms in case of war. In a way he was right. Arms once obtained by any means are at the disposal of those who hold them. The giving country cannot dictate the use of such arms unless it is prepared to put armed pressure on the receiving country.

Kutch agreement was a clear surrender before Pak blackmail and aggression. It was in keeping with the old tradition. Lal Bahadur Shastri was quite new to diplomacy. His bureaucratic aides trained under Pt. Nehru could not think of a tit for tat policy towards Pakistan.

But the Indian public opinion reacted to this surrender very strongly. On August 16, Bharatiya Jana Sangh staged

a half a million strong demonstration before Parliament House demanding a firm and reciprocal policy towards Pakistan. The effect of the demonstration was heightened by the new aggression through armed infiltrators launched by Pakistan on different border areas of Jammu & Kashmir a day earlier. As a man of the masses, Shri Shastri learnt his lesson and made up his mind not to submit to Pakistani blackmail any more.

Encouraged by the result of these probing actions, Pakistan launched a full scale attack backed by tanks on the Chhumb Sector of Jammu-Pakistan border on September 1, 1965. The objective of this sudden Pakistani thrust was the bridge on the Chenab at Akhnur, thirty miles away from Chhamb on the road to Jammu. Had Pakistan captured this bridge, almost the whole of North Western part of Jammu & Kashmir State including Kashmir Valley would have been cut off from the rest of India and Pakistan army could have captured it with the help of armed infiltrators, who had already entered the State in thousands, and their local collaborators.

It was clear within a few hours of this attack that Pakistani tanks could not be stopped unless air force was used to check their advance and a counter thrust was made into Pakistan at some other suitable place.

Pakistan had planned its strategy on the assumption that Government of India will not risk a general war with Pakistan by a counter attack along the international border and that it will only fret and fume, make loud protests and then submit to the fait-accompli. General Ayub's experience of Shri Shastri at London had encouraged him in his belief that he too was a damp squib. There he proved to be wrong. Shri Shastri was no doubt a soft-spoken man of peace. But he was a democrat and could not ignore the popular sentiment and demand for reciprocal action.

The decision of the Government of India to launch a counter offensive in Lahore and Sialkot sectors on September 6 took Pakistan and the world by surprise. This kind of Indian reaction to Pak aggression was unthinkable while

Pt. Nehru was at the helm of affairs. Difference between Shastri and Nehru, between a democrat who has to carry the people with him and an autocrat who takes the people for granted, came out in a very marked way during this period of conflict with Pakistan. Shri Shastri took the leaders of the opposition, including the R.S.S. which was anathema to Pt. Nehru, in confidence at every step. The parliament was in session and he thought it to be an advantage and not an embarrassment for the government.

The victory of India over Pakistan in 1965 war was a victory of democratic system over a totalitarian system, of a democrat over a military dictator. It created new confidence in the Indian people and added new strength and prestige to Indian democracy.

The general sympathy and support of U.K. and U.S.A. for Pakistan in this conflict clearly showed that ideology has little to do with foreign policy of a country. Foreign policy of all countries is dictated solely by the considerations of national interests as seen by the people and governments of such countries.

The unsympathetic attitude of U.S.A. and U.K. impelled Shri Shastri to submit to the Soviet pressure for a summit meeting with President Ayub at Tashkent early in January, 1966. Russian leaders wanted to avail of the opportunity to make the Russian presence in Asia felt in a big way. They also wanted to woo Pakistan whose growing friendship with China was not palatable to them. Pakistan too wanted to keep Russia on its right side because Russian tanks could roll into Rawalpindi via the new Tashkent-Kabul Road cutting through the Hindu Kush mountain within hours.

Shri Shastri was accompanied by his defence minister, Shri Y. B. Chawan and foreign minister, Shri Swaran Singh. Indian ambassador at Moscow, Shri T. N. Kaul, also joined the Indian delegation. The arrangement for the stay of Shri Shastri was made in an old villa away from his other colleagues.

Pakistan had only one objective. It wanted Indian

forces to withdraw not only from the Pak territory occupied by them but also from the Indian territory in Kashmir including Haji Peer and peaks of Kargil recaptured by India after seventeen years of Pak occupation. Shri Shastri had given a public pledge inside and outside the Parliament before he left for Tashkent that he would not return Indian territory recaptured by India to Pakistan in any case.

Shri Shastri stuck to his stand for four days. All persuasions and pressure of Russian premier, Mr. Kosygin, proved of no avail. But on the fifth day when his own colleagues also began to press him to agree to vacate Haji Peer and Kargil peaks lest Soviet Union may turn hostile, he submitted much against his better judgment. This was a collective decision of the Indian delegation to which he as a democrat submitted.

The Tashkent declaration was signed at 4 P.M. on January 11, 1966. At 5 P.M. Mr. Altaf Gauhar, Press secretary of President Ayub, told a press conference that Tashkent agreement had settled nothing except that Indian forces will vacate Pak territory and that Pakistan will continue to press its claims on Kashmir by all possible means.

The same night Shri Shastri died in his lonely villa after taking milk from a flask kept near his bed. The people were told that it was a case of heart failure. But when his body was flown to India his wife and others who saw his body were struck by the fact that his fair body had all turned black which happens when one dies of poisoning.

The facts that have since come to light have created strong doubts that Shri Shastri's death at Tashkent was not due to heart failure. The way Government of India has been resisting the demand for an enquiry into Shri Shastri's death and the strong Soviet reaction to any such demand in India have created the general impression in India that there must have been something wrong about the death of Shri Shastri.

The developments that took place in India after Shri Shastri's death and the unceremonious goodbye to the Gandhian principles of right means for the right end and its replacement by the Machiavellian doctrine of end justifying

the means by the new leadership have made the death of Shri Shastri look still more mysterious than that of Dr. Mookerji. It is difficult to say whether this mystery will ever be unravelled.

Shri Shastri's tenure of office was only 18 months as against 18 years of Pt. Nehru. But his achievements of 18 months are weightier. He has become the symbol of democracy and will to victory. No wonder therefore that the place of his Samadhi on the Yamuna in Delhi has been named Vijya Ghat, the bank of victory. His period of office was like a gush of fresh air which enlivened Indian democracy and the impact of which was felt in every hamlet and home of India. He was the true representative of real India which lives in villages, which is poor but warm hearted, illiterate but open-minded. He resurrected Indian nationalism and his policies breathed realism. He had little faith or need for the empty slogans of secularism and socialism. He never wasted his breath on them. He stood for welfare of his people and had equal respect for all faiths and ways of worship. He stood for "Jana Kalyan" and "Sarva Dharma Sama Bhav". That is why the Communists and fellow travellers were suspicious about him and started criticising him in his lifetime.

Had Shastriji lived longer, democracy would have struck deep roots in India and his communist detractors would have been silenced for all time. But providence willed otherwise.

CHAPTER VI

Towards Dynastic Rule

The news of the sudden death of Shri Lal Bahadur Shastri at Tashkent cast a gloom over the people all over the country. The general and instinctive feeling among the people was that he preferred death to breach of faith with the people to whom he had given a solemn pledge that the Indian territory under Pak occupation in Jammu and Kashmir since 1948, which had been liberated in 1965, will not be returned to Pakistan. This heightened people's respect and sympathy for him.

The search for a new Prime Minister also began immediately. Shri G. L. Nanda was once again sworn in as caretaker Prime Minister. He had now a better claim to succeed Shri Shastri. But it was clear to him and the country that he had no chance primarily because the caste and regional factors were not in his favour. He was a Punjabi and a Khshatri by caste. He had been elected to Lok Sabha from Gujarat which had been his field of activity from his youth. But he had no roots there. There was no solid group of members at his back. He was conscious of these handicaps which made him only a dumb spectator of the power game that began even before the plane carrying the body of Shri Shastri's dead body touched Delhi airport.

Shri Morarji Desai appeared to be the obvious choice to the common man as the next Prime Minister. Apart from his seniority, he had improved his prestige and reputation during the 18 months he was out of office.

But the king-makers had different plans. Shri Kamraj,

the President of the Indian National Congress, was heard muttering the name of Indira by those Congress leaders who flew to Delhi by the same plane to attend Shri Shastri's funeral. His allergy for Morarji Desai which was shared by other members *of the syndicate for narrow and selfish reasons was well known. His main argument in favour of* Mrs. Gandhi was that she *would be a good vote catcher in* the general elections that were only a year ahead. It was suggested that being a woman she would attract women voters and because of the reputation of Nehru family of being close to Muslims emotionally and culturally she will attract Muslim voters. But the most weighty factor in her favour was that she was Pt. Nehru's daughter and the impression assiduously created by her supporters that she was her father's choice for the "gaddi". The only two members of the syndicate who are known to have warned Shri Kamraj against choosing Mrs. Indira Gandhi were Shri Sanjiva Reddy and Shri P. C. Sen, the then Chief Minister of West Bengal.

But *so far as the Congress parliamentary party was concerned, there was little enthusiasm for Mrs. Gandhi. Left to* themselves the Congress legislators would not have chosen Mrs. Gandhi. Their resistance was broken through pressure from the Chief Ministers of their respective States. With the general elections only a year ahead, most Congress members did not want to displease the State bosses. The most active among the Chief Ministers in favour of Mrs. Gandhi were Shri D. P. Mishra of Madhya Pradesh who had suggested her name even after Pt. Nehru's death and Shri G. M. Sadiq, the fellow travelling Chief Minister of Jammu and Kashmir State.

It is also now well known that the Soviet Premier, Mr. Kosygin, who had travelled to India along with the body of Shri Shastri and who overstayed in India for many days after the funeral of Shri Shastri, also played a significant role in favour of Mrs. Gandhi. The communists and fellow travellers had been very unhappy with Shri Shastri whose realistic and nationalistic approach to national problems and foreign policy had shattered their dreams of peaceful take-over of India. Mrs. Gandhi had been close

to communists from her student days and could be depended upon to follow the Nehru line as a matter of filial duty as well. So the entire communist and leftist press swung into action in her favour. She was projected as both the physical and ideological successor of Nehru and torchbearer of Nehruism.

All these factors and pressures had the desired result. Mrs. Gandhi was elected leader of the Congress parliamentary party defeating Shri Morarji Desai by 355 votes to 169. The way was thus cleared for the return of dynastic rule to democratic India.

The writer happened to be with the President Dr. Radhakrishnan three days later. The President wanted to know the reaction to Mrs. Gandhi's elevation to the headship of the Government. When told that it was a misfortune of the country and that all ethical and moral values for which Mahatma Gandhi stood and by which the Congress Party swears will go down the drain, the President became pensive.

Once secure in the seat of her father, Mrs. Gandhi started turning against her own benefactor, Mr. Kamraj. He was the first to be hit and relegated to the background. Mrs. Gandhi had no respect for the fossils of the Congress Party who had thrown every canon of fairness and justice to the winds to make her the Prime Minister in the hope that she would act as their minion and plaything. But poor judge of character as they were, they forgot that Mrs. Gandhi was the only daughter of a big and doting father. She was haughty and imperious. She had never spared even her near and dear ones. It was therefore foolhardy for the Congress old guard to think that she would have any regard for them.

Shri Kamraj is the saddest man of Indian politics today. He has often publicly expressed that to plump for Mrs. Gandhi was the greatest mistake of his life.

A coterie of young favourites soon replaced the old guard of the Congress as counsellors of Mrs. Gandhi. It was popularly known as kitchen cabinet. Shri S. K. Patil once described it as Indicate as against syndicate, the name

given to the old guard by certain press-men, close to Mrs. Gandhi. Both names have stuck.

Mrs. Gandhi and her friends were determined to oust Mr. Nanda who was known for integrity and moral rectitude and who had been included in the cabinet against her will. A plot was therefore hatched with the help of some ambitious bureaucrats who were unhappy with Mr. Nanda for other reasons. The opportunity provided by a demonstration of Sadhus before Parliament House on November 6, 1966, was fully exploited and the whole thing was done in such a masterly way that Mr. Nanda was completely duped and demoralised. He submitted his resignation which was promptly accepted.

As the truth of the matter trickled out, there was a wave of resentment in the country against the dastardly hands behind the whole plot to malign peace loving and highly respectable religious leaders who had organised the demonstration as part of their campaign for a ban on cow slaughter in keeping with the Directive Principles of the state policy as laid down in the Constitution.

Soon after India went through the fourth general elections which were held in February, 1967 throughout the country.

CHAPTER VII

End of Congress Monopoly of Power

The fourth general election held in February 1967 proved to be crucial from the point of view of growth of democracy in India. It paved the way for the end of the monopoly of power in the hands of the Congress Party and gave a chance to the opposition parties to prove their mettle and worthiness to provide a democratic alternative for a peaceful change. It was both an opportunity and a challenge to the opposition parties.

The Congress on the eve of the 1967 elections was a demoralised party. Its record of the past twenty years of power was dismal and it had no leader who could cover up its failure in terms of real achievement by personal charisma.

The hope pinned by the Congress old guard on Mrs. Gandhi's appeal to Muslim and women voters proved to be unreal. The Muslims, particularly in north India, had, thanks to the policy of encouraging separatism in them pursued by the Congress since freedom for its narrow partisan ends, come back under the sway of Aligarh trained intelligentsia which successfully forged a link with the communists to give a progressive facade to its essentially communal politics. The two communist parties on their part began to vie with each other in championing the separatist demands of Muslims to woo their support in the elections. In pockets where Muslims constituted a substantial minority, they decided to support Muslim candidates put up under different labels.

So far as the women were concerned, Mrs. Gandhi had

little appeal for them except for a small minority of society women drawn from the upper strata of society in the urban areas.

Shri Kamraj, who as Congress President and king-maker was the real boss of the party, had also tarnished his reputation by putting his weight in favour of Mrs. Gandhi, ignoring seniority and record of service in the selection of the Prime Minister. The Congress was, therefore, clearly on the defensive in this election.

At the same time there was a growing feeling in the country, particularly among the educated people, that the Congress had ruled too long and that there was need for a change. This line of thinking was systematically encouraged by the leaders of opposition parties, particularly Jana Sangh, who argued that survival of democracy demanded change of government even if the record of the ruling party had been good. But with the dismal record of the Congress Party, the change had become an imperative necessity. They confidently predicted that change was coming and that the Congress would be ousted from power whether anybody liked it or not.

This aggressive and assertive approach by the Jana Sangh and other opposition parties created new confidence in the opposition and a sense of defeatism in the Congress.

The factors favourable for the Congress were the division in the ranks of the communists who had got divided into two parties, the C.P.I. following the Russian line and the C.P.M. following the Chinese line. The C.P.I. in keeping with the Russian line was soft towards Mrs. Gandhi and her supporters in the Congress. This gave an edge to C.P.M., which was more vehement and vociferous in its opposition to the Congress Party, over the C.P.I.

The same was true in the case of Socialists as well. The leadership of Praja Socialist Party was impressed by Socialist professions of Mrs. Gandhi and wanted to get near to her. It wanted adjustments with Congress in different states. On the other hand, the Socialist Party of Dr. Ram Manohar Lohia was uncompromising in its hostility and oppo-

sition to Mrs. Gandhi and the Congress Party. It was not prepared to have any truck with the Praja Socialist Party either.

This split in the socialist and communist movements and the resultant division in their votes partly helped the Congress in certain areas and constituencies.

The non-socialist opposition represented by the Jana Sangh and the Swatantra Party was more united and confident than ever before. The basic approach of both these parties to national and international problems was more or less the same. Their difference in approach regarding the Kashmir question had also been narrowed down after the 1965 war. The Swatantra Party had since publicly declared that Kashmir was an integral part of India and that Pakistan had no locus standi in regard to the Kashmir question. There was therefore general demand in the nationalist and democratic circles in the country that these two parties should present a united front in opposition to the Congress, communists and the socialists instead of cutting each other's votes. The new chief of the Jana Sangh appreciated this line of thinking and was successful in making electoral adjustments with the Swatantra Party in Rajasthan, Gujrat, Haryana and U.P. In some other States like Delhi, M.P. and Orissa, there was no clash between them. Thus Jana Sangh and Swatantra Party entered the election arena in 1967 with much greater confidence and hope of emerging as a viable democratic alternative to the Congress. The public pledge given by the then Jana Sangh president that Jana Sangh will give no quarter to communists and communalists, will oppose statist economic policies and will stand for nationalism, democracy, welfare of the common man (Jana Kalyan) and equal respect for all ways and places of worship (Sarva Dharam Sam Bhav) had a ready appeal for the common people, both educated and illiterate, in the country. The intellectual elite and the upper middle class which had been voting for the Congress in the first three general elections almost en-bloc for the first time felt drawn towards Jana Sangh. The psychology of change created by the systematic assertion by the opposition leaders that the

Congress was on the way out also influenced a good number of floating votes, particularly in the urban areas.

The fourth general election did bring about the expected change. The Congress Party was seriously mauled almost all over the country. In the Lok Sabha its strength came down to 281 in a house of 522. Some of its top leaders including Shri Atulya Ghosh, Shri S. K. Patil and Shri Mahavir Tyagi *who contested for Lok Sabha were defeated. Its vote* for Lok Sabha slumped to 40.65% from 44.07% obtained by it in 1962 elections.

As against this slender majority of the Congress—just twenty more than the minimum required for a clear majority—the opposition parties, particularly the Jana Sangh and Swatantra Party, improved their position considerably. Jana Sangh strength went up to 35 and Swatantra became the largest opposition group with 45 members at its command. The Praja Socialist Party almost marked time with 13 members, just one more than what it had got in 1962. Samyukta Socialist Party of Dr. Lohia made impressive gains. Its strength went up to 23. It had only 6 members in the outgoing Lok Sabha.

The communists too benefited by the general wind of change in the country. The C.P.I. got 23 seats and C.P.M. got 19. The total tally of 42 of the two communist parties was 17 more than 29 seats obtained by the undivided Communist Party in 1962 elections. Had they not split and cut each other's votes, their strength might have increased further. Among the regional parties the D.M.K. of Tamilnadu made a big debut in Lok Sabha with 23 seats.

A number of independents who got about fifty seats were also ideologically inclined towards the Jana Sangh and the Swatantra Party.

It was clear from the pattern of voting for the Lok Sabha that Congress would not have got even this slender majority if the opposition votes had not been split so badly. Wherever there was direct fight between the Congress and an opposition candidate, the Congress generally lost.

This pattern of voting was clearer and results more

devastating for the Congress in the elections to state assemblies. Wherever a single party or combination of parties jointly presented a clear alternative to the Congress as in Delhi, Orissa, Kerala, West Bengal and Tamilnadu, the electorate gave them clear majorities. In Rajasthan too the Congress was reduced to minority. In Punjab, Haryana, Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh Congress was able to secure very slender majorities. Even in Maharashtra, Assam, Andhra Pradesh, Gujrat, and Mysore, where Congress obtained comfortable majority, the opposition became much more powerful and effective than before.

In the absence of any country-wide clear alternative, the people generally voted for the candidates and the parties which they thought could defeat the Congress in different areas and constituencies. In Delhi, the national metropolis, for example, Jana Sangh which had established itself as the only alternative to the Congress captured 6 out of 7 Lok Sabha seats, 37 out of 56 seats of the Metropolitan Council and 53 out of 100 seats of the Municipal Corporation.

Similarly D.M.K. secured a clear majority in Tamilnadu. The defeat of Shri Kamraj, the Congress President, by a youth of the D.M.K. in a State Assembly constituency was most significant. It was a crushing blow for the so-called syndicate of the Congress and a morale booster not only for the opposition but also for the younger elements in the Congress.

The C.P.M. in combination with the Muslim League completely trounced the Congress in Kerala from where it could get only one seat in the Lok Sabha and nine in the State Assembly. With 43 seats, the C.P.M. also secured a commanding position in the United Front of leftist parties which secured a clear majority in the West Bengal Assembly.

The Swatantra Party improved its position from 36 to 49 in Orissa, from 36 to 49 in Rajasthan and from 26 to 64 in Gujrat. It became the main opposition party in these states. It improved its position in Andhra, Tamilnadu and Mysore as well.

The S.S.P. with 68 seats became the main opposition in

Bihar. It *improved its position in Uttar Pradesh* and Kerala as well.

The Jana Sangh record in 1967 elections proved to be most impressive among all the opposition parties. While its convincing victory in Delhi in full view of Prime Minister and her team of ministers gave it an international recognition, it became the main opposition in Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh with 98 and 46 seats respectively. In Haryana and Himachal Pradesh also, it became the main opposition with 13 and 7 seats respectively. It increased its strength from 13 to 23 in Rajasthan and from six to nine in Punjab. By securing representation in the State Assemblies of Gujrat, Mysore, Andhra and West Bengal for the first time, it effectively established its claim to be considered an all India party. The only State where it got a set back was Jammu & Kashmir where its strength was reduced to three from four.

An objective analysis of the causes of this impressive victory of Jana Sangh in 1967 elections which made it appear as the only potential democratic alternative to the ruling Congress Party, particularly in North India, points to two main factors in its favour apart from the general desire for change in the country. The first was its projection by its new President as a party with a clear cut and distinct ideology different from that of the Congress and its Socialist allies and fellow travellers. Instead of remaining on the defensive in regard to the charge of communalism, it began to assert that it was a truly nationalist party and that its pro-Hindu stance in Hindustan was essential to strengthen the roots of Indian nationalism. It rather put the Congress and its allies on the defensive by denouncing them as communal on the basis of their communal and partisan approach to national and international issues in which Muslims or Muslim countries were involved. The charge when substantiated with a string of telling facts began to baffle the critics of the Jana Sangh. By declaring its uncompromising *opposition to communism and communist parties in India it attracted the attention and sympathy of* all *democrats* who rightly considered the *growing influence of the communist* parties as the

greatest threat to Indian democracy. In the economic field it expressed its opposition to the growing statism in clear cut terms. While it did not rule out the entry of the State in the economic field, it made it clear that State should come in only when there were compelling economic reasons for it. It further declared that the State must consolidate the existing public sector and improve its performance before thinking of extending the scope and field of public sector further. It laid the greatest stress on self-employed sector and small scale industry and pledged itself to work for cooperation of the private capital and enterprise with the State resources for the rapid development of what it described as the "national" sector.

It also stressed the need for giving a rural bias to the economic thinking and policies because over 75% people of India live in villages and over 70% live on agriculture.

In the field of foreign policy, Jana Sangh stressed the need for genuine non-alignment as between U.S.A. and U.S.S.R. and closer relations on regional basis with countries of South and South East Asia. It also laid stress on full diplomatic relation with Israel and reciprocal policy towards Pakistan, its West Asian allies and the Arab States.

Though Jana Sangh continued to repeat that it was not wedded to any ism except nationalism, all thinking people looked upon it as a slightly right of the centre party as distinct from the Congress Party which claimed to be left of the centre. Its robust nationalism, cadre of workers and its capacity to deal with the communists and beat them at their game of intimidation if need be, gave it a distinct advantage over Swatantra Party. A powerful section of the Swatantra Party also felt inclined towards it for the same reasons.

The second factor for Jana Sangh victory in 1967 elections was its electoral adjustment with Swatantra Party. That ended its isolation and improved its touch-me-not image in the eyes of the general voter who instinctively felt the need of these two like-minded parties coming together. The electoral adjustments enabled it to improve its position

in Rajasthan and Haryana, make its debut in Gujrat and Mysore legislatures, and secure upper middle class vote for the first time in Delhi and elsewhere. But the dominant section of the Jana Sangh leadership wrongly thought that Jana Sangh victory at the polls was mainly due to the organisational set up of the party run by the cadres drawn from R.S.S. It thought that Jana Sangh would have fared even better if it had not made any electoral adjustments with the Swatantra Party. It developed the illusion that Jana Sangh was bound to come to the top in the country on its own strength and that other opposition parties will either wither away or come under its wings. This wrong assessment of the causes of Jana Sangh success in 1967 and the wrong conclusions drawn and deductions made on the basis of that wrong assessment have cost the Jana Sangh very dear.

The outcome of 1967 elections was a challenge to the leadership of the Congress Party and the opposition parties alike. For opposition parties it was an opportunity as well.

The main concern of the Congress after this election was to preserve its power at the centre. Mrs. Indira Gandhi who had been returned to Lok Sabha was now in a stronger bargaining position. The leftist and Muslim lobby in the Congress and outside immediately became active for her re-election as leader of the Congress parliamentary party. Shri Kamraj who had had a taste of Mrs. Gandhi during the one year of her power was not inclined to give another chance to her. But his own position had been considerably weakened by his electoral defeat. Furthermore, he and some of his senior colleagues, who had now got a better understanding of Mrs. Gandhi's mind, were convinced that Mrs. Gondhi would precipitate a split in the party if she was denied another term of office. She could prevent the return of the Congress to power if she could carry even 30/40 members out of the party. In view of the fact that she had no deep commitment to Congress Party, such a move on her part appeared to be a distinct possibility. Therefore, the choice before Shri Kamraj, as he confided to some of his friends later, was either to have a Congress ministry at the Centre with Mrs. Indira

Gandhi as Prime Minister or to face the prospect of Congress going out of power at the Centre. In the circumstances their choice was obvious, and Mrs. Gandhi's return to power became certain.

In order to cement the unity in the party in face of a formidable opposition, Shri Morarji Desai was persuaded to join the cabinet as Deputy Prime Minister and Finance Minister, and Home portfolio was given to Shri Y. B. Chawan who had the solid backing of over forty members from Maharashtra.

The decision of the Congress Party not to give a second term as President to Dr. Radhakrishnan on the ground of his old age and ill health and nomination of Dr. Zakir Hussain for the august office was a victory of Mrs. Indira Gandhi. She outmanoeuvred both the opposition and the old guard of the Congress and ensured firm support of Muslim members and the new president for herself.

Having been returned to power at the centre, the Congress decided to form its governments in as many States as possible. The State governors who mostly happened to belong to the Congress Party came to its rescue in States like Rajasthan where the joint front of the opposition parties had a clear majority, but Congress was the single largest party. The governor, Dr. Sampurnanand, ignored the opposition and invited the leader of the Congress Party to form government. Once in saddle, the Congress Chief Minister was able to secure defections of some opposition members to give a clear majority to the Congress Party.

There were two lines of action open for the opposition. One was to form its ministries in the States where any opposition party singly or the joint front of the opposition parties formed before the election had secured a clear majority and play the role of effective opposition in other States and allow the Congress to crumble under the weight of its own inner contradictions and conflicts. This was a logical, honourable and democratic course.

The other course open to the opposition was to forget its own ideological differences and contradictions and join

hands to pull down the Congress ministries wherever possible. This was the nihilistic approach advocated by Dr. R. M. Lohia with vehemence and persistence. Being a negative approach, it laid stress on anti-Congressism to the neglect of *other considerations. He visualised united legislative parties (Samyukta Vidhayak Dals) including the extreme left* represented by C.P.M. *and* C.P.I. *to extreme right represent*ed by the Swatantra Party in the States where no single opposition party could replace the Congress.

It was a bad day for Indian democracy when the opposition parties, particularly the Jana Sangh, plumped for the Lohia line, much against the clear advice of its own president.

The adoption of this line of action by the Jana Sangh which held key position in Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, and Haryana, and which was the second biggest opposition party in Bihar, Rajasthan and Punjab was mainly dictated by a desire to get into power somehow and to get closer to the leftist parties to remove the stigma of its being a "communal" and "reactionary" party. It betrayed lack of con*viction and confidence in the dominant section of its leadership which was partly due to its ideological confusion.* The desire to improve its image in the eyes of the so-called progressives took the better of practical wisdom, and politics of convenience and opportunism took the place of the politics based on principles, ideology and convictions.

The refusal of the Jana Sangh to join hands with the Swatantra Party in the parliament to form a joint parliamentary party on the lines of National Democratic Party formed by Dr. S. P. Mookerji was the direct result of adoption of Lohia line by it. *Had Swatantra and Jana Sangh groups in parliament joined hands*, about a score of independents would have joined them to make a solid bloc of about one hundred members in the Lok Sabha which would have become the official opposition and potential alternative to the ruling Congress party. *It would have also acted as a* gravitational pull for those in the Congress who were feeling upset and suffocated by *the black-mail tactics of the leftist and fellow traveller fringe of* the *Congress party with the* overt and covert support of the Prime Minister.

The importance of right leadership and clarity of vision in the life of a party is as important as in the life of a nation. Jana Sangh not only refused to learn from the example of Dr. Mookerji, but what is worse, it went to the other extreme of befriending those who kicked it and kicking those who were close to it in outlook and wanted to be one with it.

CHAPTER VIII

Politics of Convenience

Politics of convenience and defections which has plagued India's political life since 1967 elections and brought Indian democracy to the brink of disaster began with Bihar. The Samyukta Socialist Party of Dr. Lohia emerged as the main opposition party in that State in the election of 1967, with 68 seats. Jana Sangh and C.P.I. got 25 each. The Congress, though it remained the single biggest party, failed to get a clear majority. This encouraged Dr. Lohia to try his line of action in that State first.

The proposal to have a non-Congress coalition ministry in which both the Communist Party and the Jana Sangh should be partners should have been rejected outright by the Jana Sangh which had voted against cooperation with Communist Party in any shape or form at its plenary session held at Jullundur in April 1966. It was equally repugnant to Communist Party. But forming of United Fronts with even diametrically different and opposite parties with the object of infiltrating into them or eating them up is a well recognised part of the communist methodology which is based on the principle of "end justifying the means". Moreover, the relations of the C.P.I. with the S.S.P., the kingpin of the proposed coalition, were known to be very cordial and they had cooperated in the elections as well. But so far as Jana Sangh was concerned, it had no love lost for the S.S.P. either. It considered S.S.P. to be its main rival in the race to fill the vacuum arising out of the anticipated decay and disintegration of the Congress Party. It was therefore a painful surprise for all democrats when it was announced

that Bihar Jana Sangh will also join the proposed coalition. What pained the writer most was the information that the decision had the blessing of the R.S.S. high command as well.

The green signal from Bihar cleared the way for similar coalition governments in Punjab, U.P., Haryana and Madhya Pradesh. In West Bengal the left front of communists and other leftist parties succeeded in roping in Bangla Congress to form a communist dominated ministry under the leadership of Shri Ajay Mookerji of the Bangla Congress.

Even with the inclusion of communists, the opposition did not have a clear majority in U.P., M.P., Haryana and Punjab. But this difficulty was overcome by persuading Ch. Charan Singh, Shri G. N. Singh and Rao Birendra Singh to defect from the Congress with a few supporters and become Chief Ministers in the coalition governments thus formed in U.P., M.P. and Haryana respectively.

These defections took the Congress Party by surprise. It marked the beginning of the process of defections in the reverse direction. But having set the pattern itself in Rajasthan, where it had converted itself into the majority party by securing defections from the opposition by offering allurements of money and office, it had forfeited all moral right to protest against such defections from its side.

These defections and formation of heterogeneous ministries helped both the Congress defectors and the Congress party. The defectors were able to build a new image and power base for themselves which enabled them to cast off the evil reputation that they shared with other Congressmen and emerge as main check on the growing power and popularity of Jana Sangh in these states. The Congress party patched up its differences and began to show new resilience under instinct for self-preservation. Had these coalitions not been formed, and had Jana Sangh maintained its posture of uncompromising opposition to communism and statism, a good section of the Congress would have gravitated towards it in due time. That possibility now became very remote.

These coalition ministries were doomed to failure from

their very inception. They did not satisfy *any of the pre-conditions* for the success of a coalition ministry in a democratic set-up. These conditions are:

1. *Coalition partners must share a common faith in democracy. No coalition can be a success in which one partner wants to use the power to wreck democracy itself.*

2. Coalition partners must draw up a common minimum programme and they must singly and collectively try to implement *that programme. If the coalition partners all the time remain pre-occupied with scoring over other partners* and projecting themselves at the cost of the coalition, coalition cannot succeed.

3. The principle of joint responsibility and dominant position of the Chief Minister is even more important in a coalition ministry. This demands a very careful choice of ministers representing different coalition partners and a sense of mutual respect and preparedness for mutual adjustments in them.

These coalitions failed to fulfil any of these conditions. Almost all coalition partners began sniping at one another from the very beginning. The communists never missed an opportunity to put the Jana Sangh in the wrong. In this very often they had the support and sympathy of socialists who wanted to cut Jana Sangh to size. The choice of Jana Sangh ministers in most cases was not very happy. With the background of isolationist policies of Jana Sangh, they lacked the capacity to adjust and pull on with others on equal terms. Almost all coalition partners were conscious of the possibility of a mid-term election in their respective states and were therefore all the time more concerned with improving the prospects of their parties vis-a-vis other coalition partners in the next elections rather than give the states under their charge an honest and more efficient administration.

The Jana Sangh proved to be the worst loser in this bad bargain. Even those whom it had made chief ministers got alienated from it. *Its weaknesses were exposed and its image got tarnished. Of all the Chief Ministers in these coali-*

tion ministries, Ch. Charan Singh of U.P. had the best reputation. He was known to be very close to Jana Sangh ideologically. The writer was therefore shocked to learn from him when he met with him a few months after his installation as Chief Minister of U.P. that he was totally fed up with Jana Sangh and its provincial leadership. "I had the highest respect for Jana Sangh and felt closest to it ideologically before I left the Congress on your party's behest," he said and added: "But I am a disillusioned man now. My experience of working with your party has convinced me that you are narrow minded and that no one who does not belong to the R.S.S. and who is not a Brahmin can have any place in the Jana Sangh". This categorical statement from Ch. Charan Singh was a warning and a portent of the future shape of politics in U.P., the key province of the country. When mid-term elections were ordered in that state soon after, Ch. Charan Singh instead of working with the Jana Sangh launched his own party, Bharatiya Kranti Dal, to contest the elections. Under his leadership this party soon became a force. It emerged as the main opposition with 99 seats in the State Assembly and the Jana Sangh strength was reduced from 98 to 47.

The same story was repeated in Haryana where Rao Birendra Singh formed his Vishal Haryana Party and emerged as the main opposition party in that state after the mid-term election. Jana Sangh strength was reduced to 7 from 13. Bihar was the only state in which Jana Sangh gained three seats in the mid-term elections.

The net result of the short-lived experiment of coalition ministries was that the Congress improved its image by comparison. Jana Sangh on the other hand tarnished its image and lost its predominant position among the opposition parties in north India, and powerful regional parties like Akali Dal in Punjab, Vishal Haryana Party in Haryana and Bharatiya Kranti Dal in U.P. emerged as main rivals of the Congress.

Failure of the coalition experiment in the states and determined opposition of Swatantra Party and a section of

the Jana Sangh to the plan for a similar experiment at the centre nipped the move for a joint front of all the opposition parties in the Parliament in the bud.

But the fall of Congress ministries in the States one after the other gave some anxious time to Congress leadership at the centre. For the first time it began to take a serious note of defections and started thinking of ways and means to check them.

Soon after the defections began after the 1967 election, the writer as president of Bharatiya Jana Sangh, addressed a letter to the leaders of the national parties pointing out the dangers to democracy inherent in the politics of defections and suggested a meeting to devise ways and means of checking defections. Shri Kamraj, the Congress President, agreed with the writer that defections were dangerous but parried the suggestion for concrete steps to prevent them. Shri N. G. Goray, President of the P.S.P., was the only opposition leader who gave a positive response to the writer's suggestion.

The move to get any thing done in the matter on the non-official level having failed, an unofficial resolution was moved in the Lok Sabha urging upon the government to appoint a parliamentary committee to go into the question of defections and suggest ways and means of putting an end to them. The resolution was passed unanimously, and in pursuance of it the government appointed a committee under the chairmanship of the Home Minister, Shri Y. B. Chavan, in March 1968. Besides leaders of the opposition parties it included eminent jurists like Shri Daftri, Shri Kumarmangalam, and Shri Sitalvad and eminent public figures like Dr. H. N. Kunzru and Shri J. P. Narain. The Congress party was represented by the Law Minister, late Shri Govinda Menon, and Minister for Parliamentary Affairs, Dr. Ram Subhag Singh, besides the Home Minister. The writer was also a member of this committee.

One of the suggestions made by the Home Minister, Shri Chavan, to check defections was that the State governors and the President should dissolve the Vidhan Sabhas and Lok

Sabha if the Chief Minister or the Prime Minister so desired to prevent defections which may threaten the stability of the government of the day. Significantly, Dr. Ram Subhag Singh, his cabinet colleague, opposed this suggestion vehemently.

This episode in the committee on defections gave the first indication of the nervousness in the Central leadership of the Congress about the possible danger to the Government of Mrs. Gandhi through defections. It also pointed to the divergent thinking among the central leadership on the question of dissolution of Lok Sabha. Shri Chavan, who was known to be closer to Mrs. Gandhi, was in favour of giving her blanket power to make recommendation for dissolution of Lok Sabha which should be binding on the President, while Dr. R. S. Singh held that this would make the Prime Minister a dictator. Most of the members of the committee concurred with the view of Dr. Singh and therefore the suggestion fell through.

By the time the committee on defections concluded its labours, the tide of defections had been reversed. The Congress ranks were being swelled by defections from the opposition parties. Therefore, the government did not feel the urgency of doing something effective to prevent defections. This was clear from the opposition of the government members to the suggestion for putting a limit on the strength of the Central Cabinet as well. They were however agreeable to put a limit on the strength of State cabinets. They also agreed to the suggestion that no defector be given any office of profit for at least one year.

More than three years have passed since the committee on defections submitted its report, but nothing has been done by the government to implement it so far.

The real gainer from this suicidal politics of convenience of the nationalist and democratic opposition parties was the Prime Minister Mrs. Indira Gandhi. Her position in the party and the government was strengthened. She could dub those who had defected from the Congress as reactionaries and opportunists. In fact the exit of men like Ch. Charan

Singh, who had the guts to oppose even Pt. Nehru when he was at the height of his power, on the question of cooperative farming, only strengthened the leftists and Nehruites in the ruling party in the key province of U.P. She therefore became more confident and self-assertive.

The leftists, particularly the small group of ex-communists and ex-socialists who had joined the Congress with the set purpose of making it a socialist party and who had come to be known as "Young Turks" became more active and started sniping at the senior colleagues of Mrs. Gandhi like Shri Morarji Desai inside and outside the parliament.

But the return of Shri S. K. Patil and Shri Kamraj to Lok Sabha in two bye-elections gave a new hope and courage to her opponents as well. Shri Morarji Desai was too sincere and honest to be a match for the stratagems of Mrs. Gandhi and her leftist brigade. His public relations remained poor as ever. His postures of self-righteousness repelled even those who had high regard for his integrity, efficiency and Gandhian values. But Shri S. K. Patil and Shri Kamraj were efficient party managers. They could be the rallying point of the dissidents and have-nots in the party. Some reported remarks of Shri S. K. Patil also pointed to his determination to make himself felt. Shri Nijlingappa who had succeeded Shri Kamraj as President of the Congress was also chagrined by the overbearing manners and lack of proper attention from Mrs. Gandhi. As a practical man of affairs he had nothing but deep distrust for the doctrinaire approach of Mrs. Gandhi.

Within the Lok Sabha the Speaker, Shri Sanjiva Reddy, was no friend of Mrs. Gandhi. His role as Speaker was unexceptionable and in the best of tradition of this office. He was independent, assertive but fair to all sides of the House. This perturbed Mrs. Gandhi. With her slender majority in the Lok Sabha, an independent and impartial Speaker could prove dangerous for the government.

This was not a very happy situation for her. She began to be haunted by the fear of loss of leadership of the party and power through defections or other moves within

her own following. But with the President on her side, she could brandish the stick of dissolution of Lok Sabha to silence her opponents and critics, none of whom wanted to face the electorate after the painful experience of 1967 elections. Threat of dissolution of the Lok Sabha therefore became the mainstay of her power and position in the party and the government.

But this situation was dramatically changed by the sudden death of President Zakir Hussain in May 1969.

CHAPTER IX

The Coup

A crucial phase for Indian democracy began on May 3, 1969. Dr. Zakir Hussain, the President of India, suddenly died of heart failure at about 11 A.M. on that day. His death set a train of events into motion which is now culminating in the virtual end of democracy in India.

The writer happened to be in the Parliament House to *attend a committee meeting fixed earlier for that day.* The minister who presided had come to know of the death of the President before the meeting started. But he broke the news *to the members only after the meeting was over.* *When asked* why he had not given the information earlier and adjourned the meeting as a mark of respect to the deceased President, *he shrugged his broad shoulders, took the writer aside and* said: "It is good riddance. He was in her pocket. She always threatened to get the Lok Sabha dissolved whenever there was any move to change the leadership. Now, we will have a really independent President".

It was a revealing statement. It gave a clear indication of the *working of the mind of the dominant section in the* Congress Party which was known to be not very happy with the self-willed and imperious manners of Mrs. Gandhi.

The question of finding a successor to Dr. Zakir Hussain on the Presidential gaddi immediately became the dominant issue before the country. Shri V. V. Giri, the Vice-President, aspired to be chosen as the Congress candidate for the post. The past precedents were all in his favour. But the Congress leadership including Mrs. Gandhi was known to be averse

to him. He was considered to be too old, enfeebled and unattractive to be elevated to the august post. His performance as chairman of the Rajya Sabha had also not been in any way outstanding.

Mrs. Gandhi for some time toyed with the idea of pushing up Shri Morarji Desai to the Presidential chair. That would have removed a potential rival and the only effective check on her in the Government from her way. Shri Desai could not be a tool of the dominant faction of the Congress which had stood in the way of his becoming the Prime Minister twice and therefore could be expected to be more loyal to Mrs. Gandhi than to her opponents. But Shri Desai did not react to the suggestion favourably. The move to elevate the Congress President, Shri Nijlingappa, to the Presidential Chair also fell through because of his disinclination.

The dominant faction of the Congress Party was known to favour the Speaker of the Lok Sabha, Shri Sanjiva Reddi, for the post. Shri Reddi had a vast and varied experience at his command. He had worked as Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh, President of the All India Congress Committee and a minister in the Central Cabinet. He was one of those few top leaders of the Congress who had expressed his doubts about making Mrs. Gandhi the leader of the Congress Parliamentary Party and Prime Minister of the country. Unforgiving as Mrs. Gandhi is, she decided to drop him from the central cabinet when she re-constituted it after the election of 1967. He was offered the post of Speaker of Lok Sabha in the hope that he will refuse it. When he decided to accept the offer, efforts were made to dissuade him. But he refused to oblige.

The role and performance of Shri Sanjiva Reddy as Speaker of the Lok Sabha, in which opposition was qualitatively stronger than the party in power and quantitatively almost its equal, was exemplary. He began to be considered as a very independent and capable Speaker by his friends and foes alike. He set a very healthy precedent when he resigned his membership of the Congress Party after his election as Speaker. His attitude towards the Prime Minis-

ter, Mrs. Gandhi, inside and outside the House, was correct and dignified. The opposition held him in high regard. In fact his name for Presidentship was first suggested by late Shri Nath Pai of P.S.P. and the writer purely because of his high performance as Speaker.

Mrs. Gandhi was known to be opposed to Shri Sanjiva Reddy. His independence of character could not suit her. She wanted a reliable and pliable candidate whom her opponents may find it difficult to oppose. She thought that Shri Jagjivan Ram, the veteran Harijan leader and a senior minister in her cabinet, could be such a candidate.

The selection of the Congress candidate had to be done by the Congress Parliamentary Board which was dominated by the "Syndicate". Its meeting was scheduled to be held at *Bangalore in early July at the time of the meeting of All India* Congress Committee. Mrs. Gandhi, finding her position weak, postponed her departure for Bangalore and tried to unnerve the syndicate by sending a ten point note on radicalisation of economic policy of the Congress, through Shri Fakhar-ud-din Ali Ahmed, her trusted ally and colleague in the party and the government. The Congress President, Shri Nijlingappa, and his *senior colleagues saw through the game and tried to turn the tables on her by adopting her note as the basis of the economic policy of the* Congress.

Having thus failed to give an *ideological turn to the power struggle within the Congress at the very outset,* Mrs. *Gandhi decided to stay her hand.* Shri Sanjiva Reddy was chosen as the Congress nominee for Presidentship and not Shri Jagjivan Ram, the choice of Mrs. Gandhi.

The over-ruling of the Prime Minister *by the Parlia-*mentary Board in the matter of selection of its nominee for the post of head of the State was nothing new. Pt. Jawahar Lal Nehru had been twice overruled by the Congress Parliamentary Board when it chose Dr. Rajendra Prasad to be the Congress candidate for the post of President in 1952 and 1957. Pt. Nehru accepted the majority decision with grace both the times and himself filed the nomination papers of the official nominee. *But Mrs. Gandhi's reaction was different.*

She immediately threatened the Parliamentary Board of "dire consequences" of overruling her.

The plan of action for her seems to have been kept ready by her allies and patrons, the Communist Party of India and their foreign mentors.

They had a vested interest in the continuation of Mrs. Gandhi as Prime Minister of India. They considered her to be not only physical but also ideological successor of Pt. Nehru and felt confident of successfully riding her band-wagon to drag India to communism. They had a much clearer grasp of the implications of the election of an independent person like Sanjiva Reddi for the future pattern of politics in India than most of her own supporters. So they had hatched a plan, presumably in consultation with their friends, to have a pliable and like-minded President before she left for Bangalore. According to this plan Shri V. V. Giri was to declare his candidature for Presidentship as and when Mrs. Gandhi failed to have her nominee accepted by the Congress Parliamentary Board. The plan was carried out immaculately.

To give a dramatic touch to the plan, the announcement by All India Radio about Shri Sanjiva Raddy's candidature as Congress nominee for Presidentship was interrupted to announce the candidature of Shri V. V. Giri. This would not have been possible without the consent and cooperation of the Minister of Information who was then a close confidant of the Prime Minister. No one who heard that broadcast could avoid the conclusion that the sponsors of Shri V. V. Giri and authorities controlling the A.I.R. were working in collusion to project Shri Giri as a serious rival to the official candidate of the ruling party.

To begin with, only the two communist parties declared their open support for Shri Giri. As leader of the ruling party Mrs. Indira Gandhi, in keeping with the past tradition, herself filed the nomination papers of Shri Reddy. Any person with regard for democratic norms and any sense of political morality and scruples would have felt bound to support and work for the success of the candidate nominated

by him. But such bourgeois values can have no meaning for communists and their fellow travellers who believe in "end justifies the means". The decision to scuttle her own Presidential candidate by Mrs. Gandhi was the first step in the operation murder democracy that has been in full swing in India since 1971.

Having made up her mind to get Shri Sanjiva Reddy, the official candidate of the Congress, defeated and the communist sponsored candidate, Shri V. V. Giri, elected as President of the Indian Republic, she allowed herself to be used as an instrument of communist strategy in India. The first move in that strategy was to give an ideological colour to the naked power struggle. To that end Mrs. Gandhi in a sudden move decided to take finance portfolio from Shri Morarji Desai into her own hands on the plea that he was standing in the way of implementation of radical programmes, and followed it up by nationalisation of the major banks by an ordinance. That this decision was taken purely on political considerations was clear from the timing and wording of the ordinance. The ordinance was issued barely 36 hours before Parliament was to meet. As such it was a gross misuse of the power of the President to issue ordinance. Mr. M. R. Masani, the General Secretary of the Swatantra Party, and the writer challenged the constitutional propriety of the ordinance when parliament was about to meet, in the Supreme Court. Some other people challenged the ordinance on its merits as well.

These two steps were followed by systematic misuse of mass media like the All India Radio and the official machinery to whip up mass hysteria in favour of Mrs. Gandhi and against Morarji Desai who was now dubbed as part of the syndicate. The C.P.I. and its fellow travellers in the Congress immediately went into action. Truckloads of paid workers began to be brought before Mrs. Gandhi's residence in support of the decision, and the reports of such command performances began to be broadcast to the nation to create the impression that there was a genuine popular upsurge in her favour.

The only party which could have countered this propa-

for their candidate by any means, fair or foul, and who had tremendous amounts of money at their disposal to purchase the vacillating voters, made full use of this situation. They tried to corner second preference votes of Jana Sangh legislators for Giri wherever they could.

Ultimately, Jana Sangh did declare that its second preference vote will go to Shri Reddi. This was done on August 14 while polling was to take place on August 16. Had this declaration been made earlier, not only all Jana Sangh second preference votes would have been ensured for Shri Reddi but also Jana Sangh legislators might have been able to influence some vacillating Congress and independent legislators as well. Looking at the narrow margin with which Shri Giri won in the second count, it can be safely said that had Jana Sangh leadership been clear in its mind and had it realised the grave and long range implication of the election of Shri Giri, the result of presidential election and the course of Indian politics would have been quite different and the future of democracy in India would not have looked as bleak as it does today.

The defeat of the official candidate of the ruling Congress party at the hands of the communist sponsored candidate, Shri V. V. Giri, as President of India was a virtual political coup brought about by the two or three Communist Parties of India in the name of Mrs. Indira Gandhi. It was hailed by the communists as their victory and was treated as such by some common people as well. For Mrs. Gandhi it was a personal triumph. She had trounced the old guard of her own party and made it clear to all and sundry that she was prepared to go to any length to keep herself in power. It was a notice not only to the Congress leadership but also to the entire democratic opposition and the people in general that Mrs. Gandhi's will shall prevail in the country even if it may require a split in the Congress party, murder of democracy and sell out of the country to any inimical foreign interests.

CHAPTER X

The Congress Splits

Defeat of Shri Sanjiva Reddy, the official candidate of the Congress Party, at the hands of Shri V. V. Giri came as a shock to the Congress leadership and surprised the people in general. Few had seriously thought that the official candidate of the Congress Party, who had assured backing of a number of opposition parties, could be defeated at the hands of the communist sponsored candidate, even though he had the support of the Congress Prime Minister with all the power and patronage of that office.

The defeat of Shri Reddy could be ascribed mainly to complacency and timidness of the Congress leadership. It seemed to be so confident about the success of its candidate that it did not feel like taking serious notice of the open opposition of the Prime Minister and some of her cabinet colleagues to the party candidate. It probably thought that Mrs. Gandhi will not be able to carry the majority with her and that once the party candidate was elected President, she could be brought to book in no time. It was clear to all political observers that the Congress Parliamentary Party would elect a new leader after the election of Mr. Reddy as President and that Mrs. Gandhi would cease to be the Prime Minister. It therefore shirked taking any action against any of the ministerial colleagues of Mrs. Gandhi lest it may lead to a split in the party. The syndicate felt that once its candidate was elected, the rebels would come before them in sack cloth and ashes and beg forgiveness. It therefore thought that it could afford to ignore their open rebellion and prevent a split. But it failed to realise that the

Indian worship of the rising sun could be exploited by Mrs. Gandhi much more effectively because she was actually in power.

For the communists and their kins the election was even more crucial than for Mrs. Gandhi. Their entire strategy in regard to India depended on the continuation of Mrs. Gandhi as Prime Minister of India. They therefore were determined to leave no stone unturned to get their nominee elected. Money was no consideration with them. They decided to purchase second preference votes of some of the avowed supporters of Dr. Deshmukh, whose indecision about their second preference vote came handy to them. They could get commitments for second preference vote for Mr. Giri from some of those who were to cast their first preference vote for Dr. Deshmukh without much pressure on their conscience.

The Congress President, Shri Nijlingappa, however did foresee the possibility of Shri Giri getting elected because of the contagious effect of the switch over to his side by a majority of Central ministers. He therefore thought of suspending some senior ministers from the party for working against the party candidate. Had he done so, many a wavering Congress legislator would have remained bound to the party decision. But some of the syndicate members, including Shri Sanjiva Reddy himself, are known to have opposed this move.

The approach of Shri Sanjiva Reddy to this question was purely subjective. He felt so confident of his success on the strength of support of a large majority of the electorate belonging to nationalist and democratic camp besides his own party men that he thought that disciplinary action against any one before the election might generate unnecessary bitterness, which may jeopardise his chances of success. For the same reason he refused to move out of his house and personally campaign for himself. Shri Giri on the other hand went from place to place to contact the state legislators and members of Parliament personally. It made a good deal of difference in his favour.

good many signatures on this requisition were forged. But under the new style of politics it was all fair.

In her letter addressed to the members of A.I.C.C. in September, 1969 she tried to give a clear ideological turn to the expected split in the party. She wrote that the people who were opposing her were the same as used to oppose her father and who were a stumbling block in the way of his progressive policies. Obviously, she was referring to those who subscribed to Sardar Patel's views and his approach to social and economic problems before the country.

That Sardar Vallabh Bhai Patel and Pandit Jawahar Lal Nehru belonged to different social strata and had conflicting views on socio-economic questions is well known. Sardar Vallabh Bhai Patel was the son of a poor peasant who had fought in the war of independence of 1857 as a soldier in the army of Rani of Jhansi. He was one of five brothers and two sisters. Their mother had died early. So he had the gruesome experience of the life of a motherless Indian peasant child who has to perform all duties from cooking food and cleaning utensils to tilling the field. That Vallabh Bhai Patel and his elder brother Shri Vithal Bhai Patel could study up to matriculation in this situation goes to their credit. Both the brothers took to legal profession after leaving the school and with their practical common sense and rural roots soon rose to the top of the profession. Both were drawn to freedom movement when they had achieved success in professional life. Vallabh Bhai who earned the title of Sardar for his successful conduct of the Bardoli peasant agitation soon became a devout follower and close confidant of Gandhiji. With his practical experience of the life of peasants and workers, he became the pioneer in the field of peasant and labour movement in the country. He was a man of the masses, member of the proletariat in the communist parlance, in the true sense of the term.

Pt. Jawahar Lal Nerhu on the other hand was the only son of a rich aristocrat with feudal background. He had spent all his early life in company with the children of British lords in England. As he himself wrote later, he was Muslim

by culture, English by education and Hindu only by accident. He was therefore as cut off from the Indian masses as any British Lord could be. He became a romantic Marxist in his student days in Britain and became an admirer of communism and Soviet Union after his sojourn in that country sometime later. Culturally, temperamentally and emotionally, he was poles apart from Sardar Patel. Gandhiji's greatness and success lay in his ability to carry Nehru and Patel together in the struggle for freedom. His partiality for Pt. Nehru, who behaved as a spoiled child even towards him, was in keeping with the typically Hindu mentality of kicking the friends and hugging the enemies. But he was realistic enough to realise that the omnibus character that the Congress had developed under his leadership would be conducive neither to its own healthy growth nor to the growth of parliamentary democracy after freedom. That explains his exhortation to his followers soon after the achievement of freedom and just before his death regarding dissolution of the Congress organisation and formation of two new parties out of it on the basis of coherent socio-economic programmes and ideology. Had this last testament of Gandhiji been honoured by the Congress, Patel and Nehru would have become the founder leaders of two distinct and viable political parties in free India. Such a development would have strengthened Indian democracy in its early formative years.

But that did not happen. Pt. Nehru decided to betray the socialist wing of the Congress Party of which he had been the moving spirit and ride the band-wagon of Sardar Patel to remain in power. He thus laid the foundation of the politics of convenience which has become the bane of Indian political life since then. After the death of Sardar Patel in November 1930, the situation changed. Now it was the turn of the followers of Sardar Patel to ride his band-wagon to share power. Thus the omnibus character of the Congress Party was maintained. It militated against the rise of an effective alternative to the Congress Party with a distinct ideology and programme. This was the major factor in keeping the Congress party continuously in power since freedom.

The split in the Congress therefore was considered to be an imperative necessity for the polarisation of like minded parties and elements and the growth of two evenly balanced parties in the country.

The split in the Congress party that followed the open revolt of Mrs. Gandhi against the party leadership in Gandhi centenary year of 1969 was therefore a welcome development which could have strengthened Indian democracy if it had contributed to the rise of two distinct and ideologically coherent parties out of the omnibus Congress party. But that did not happen. Even though Mrs. Gandhi tried to give the split an ideological colour, it was essentially a split on the basis of struggle for power between two factions in the Congress, each of which was as heterogeneous as the other. The split found the so-called reactionaries like Shri Morarji Desai and Shri S. K. Patil and some of the confirmed socialists like Shri Ashok Mehta ranged on one side and fellow travellers and Young Turks like Khadilkar, Mohan Dharia, K. R. Ganesh and Raghunath Reddy and princes and known patelites like Maharaja Karan Singh, Maharaja Bhanu Prakash Singh and K. Hanumanthaiya ranged on the other.

The first impulse of the Congress Rump which elected Dr. Ram Subhag Singh as the leader of its sixty and odd members in Lok Sabha under the over-all chairmanship of Shri Morarji Desai was to avoid any ideological conflict and train its guns only against Mrs. Gandhi for what was her undemocratic conduct in the presidential election. Some of the leaders of the Rump even tried to outbid Mrs. Gandhi so far as swearing by socialism and taking radical postures was concerned. The writer spent long hours with some of them in an effort to convince them of the futility of giving the split the colour of a personal feud. If the Congress rump had no difference with the Indira Congress, which came to be known as Indicate, in regard to ideology and programme, it was bound to lose both in the short and the long run because Indicate was in power and had 225 members in the Lok Sabha as against 60 of the Syndicate. Had the Syndicate decided to call Mrs. Gandhi's bluff by

openly declaring itself to be a party wedded to the ideals of Sardar Patel, which were shared by all other Congress leaders of the time except Pt. Nehru, the old Congress could have become the rallying point of all genuine nationalists and democrats who considered the growing communist and Soviet influence on Mrs. Gandhi as a serious threat to the future of democracy and survival of the traditional Indian values of life. Some of them did appreciate the logic of this line. But they were afraid of taking the required stand openly for fear of displeasing some of their socialist and Nehruite colleagues who were actuated only by a personal grudge against Mrs. Gandhi and disgust for her conduct during the presidential election.

But as time passed, even the so-called radicals in the syndicate camp also began to realise that the old Congress must take an ideological line distinct from that of the Indicate and collaborate with Jana Sangh and Swatantra Party even for maintaining its identity and preventing its members from gravitating towards the Indicate which had everything to attract them.

The writer being an ardent advocate of polarisation of political parties on ideological lines wrote a number of articles and prepared a working paper suggesting the ideological and programmatic basis for collaboration between these three parties. It was suggested that the three parties should unite in the Parliament and work under one leader on the lines of National Democratic Party which functioned under Dr. Shyama Prasad Mookerji's leadership in the first Lok Sabha. The move, though it was initiated by the top leaders of the old Congress and welcomed by the Jana Sangh and the Swatantra Party, fell through because of the opposition of Dr. Ram Subhag Singh who suspected it to be a move to dislodge him from the position of leader of the opposition in the Lok Sabha. His suspicion had some basis. His performance as leader of the opposition had disillusioned even some of his ardent admirers. It was generally felt that Shri Morarji Desai would be more acceptable and more effective leader of the combined nationalist and democratic opposition in the Parliament.

The failure of this move was considered to be a victory for Mrs. Gandhi's strategy. She was known to be pursuing a policy of dangling the carrot of office before some of the Congress(O) members. The communists and their fellow travellers in the Congress were also keen to see this move fail. So the entire mass media at the command of the government and the Communist party started a campaign for creating division and dissensions in all the three parties by projecting some of their leaders as progressive and others as reactionary. The made up "progressives" in these parties then began to think of protecting their progressive image by stressing the need of having some leftist and "progressive" party also with them. In doing so they implicitly conceded that they considered their own parties to be communal or reactionary.

But the very possibility of the old Congress, Jana Sangh and Swatantra Party coming together in the Parliament sent a wave of consternation in Mrs. Gandhi's camp. She knew better than anybody else that most of the Congress members were with her simply because she happened to be in power and could disburse favours. They were least bothered about ideological considerations. Rather some of them were upset by the ultra radical slogans of the fellow travellers in Indira Gandhi's camp who appeared to enjoy her confidence and support. Mrs. Gandhi's dependence on the communists then to keep her minority government going compelled her to toe their line to the chagrin of a majority of her party men who had no love lost for communists. It was therefore felt by most political observers that the emergence of a viable alternative through combination of Congress(O), Jana Sangh and Swatantra parties in the Lok Sabha will pave the way for a swift defection of a big chunk of the Indicate members leading to exit of Mrs. Gandhi from power.

As this possibility grew, Mrs. Gandhi and her communist friends and their foreign mentors began to plan a strategy for an operation murder democracy. Mrs. Gandhi has never been known for any commitment to any particular ideology or party or even to friends. She is a self-centred

imperious lady whose sole passion is to wield absolute power. *Therefore, she was prepared to consider* even such plans and moves which would have horrified any genuine democrat and nationalist. The first step was to dissolve the Lok Sabha to prevent the possibility of any sudden move to oust her through a snap vote. Even the suggestion of such a move was helpful to her because most members of parliament belonging to all parties wanted to avoid going to the polls before the expiry of their full term. This kept them on their toes all the time. They were even prepared to assure Mrs. Gandhi of their complete loyalty if she could assure them that there would be no dissolution of the Parliament before time.

But as time passed, she and her fellow travelling advisers began to feel that time was not on her side, that discontent in the country was growing and collaboration between nationalist and democratic opposition parties was projecting the image of an alternative to Indira Congress in the election due in early 1972. Then Lok Sabha elections would have been held alongwith the State Assembly elections. That would have made any large scale rigging of elections for the Lok Sabha well nigh impossible. Furthermore, the success of a candidate for Lok Sabha very much depends on candidates for Assembly constituencies falling within the Lok Sabha constituency. Therefore, Lok Sabha candidate can become immune to the frowns or favours of the powers that be.

It was therefore decided to dissolve the Lok Sabha and get Lok Sabha elections de-linked from Assembly elections. But there was *no ostensible* cause for dissolution of Lok Sabha. The Government, even though it was a minority *government, had never been defeated* and had been carrying on well with the support of the communists in the opposi*tion. Therefore the sudden move of* Mrs. Gandhi to dissolve the Lok Sabha took everybody by surprise. The leaders of *opposition parties and groups in* the Lok Sabha even approached the President on December 24, 1970 to request him *not to dissolve the* Lok Sabha because there was no valid ground for doing so.

But later it was learnt that Mrs. Gandhi had met the President just an hour before the leaders of the opposition met him and conveyed to him her intention to dissolve the Lok Sabha. That explained the complete silence of the otherwise effusive President when the leaders of the opposition met him.

The announcement about dissolution of Lok Sabha was made on the night of December 27.

nuation as Prime Minister of India. It was also well known that on the eve of elections she and some of her cabinet colleagues went about collecting huge funds from big business houses in so many ways. But till then nobody had ever thought that any power in India could think of rigging the elections. The first four general elections in India had been generally fair and free. The Election Commission of India, therefore, had earned a reputation and people's confidence. Mr. Sen Varma, who succeeded Mr. Sundaram as Chief Election Commissioner in 1969, was known to be a person of integrity. No one ever doubted his bona fides and it was expected that he would continue the tradition of Shri Sukumar Sen and Shri Sundaram as the head of Election Commission. However, there were two significant developments prior to the elections which should have created doubts among the people. First was the taking over of the Home portfolio by Mrs. Gandhi which brought Central Intelligence, Police and Election Commission directly under her control and the second was the change in rule 56A of the Election rule which reads: "The ballot papers taken out of each ballot box shall be arranged in convenient bundles and scrutinised". It meant that the counting of votes must be done polling boothwise. This had been the practice during the first four general elections. A suggestion was made by some people after the fourth general election that counting should be done after mixing of ballot papers of a number of polling booths to prevent candidates from knowing which areas or villages had voted for them and which had not. But the Election Commission in its report on 4th general election rejected this suggestion after discussing its pros and cons. If the new Election Commissioner held different views, he could have recommended change in rules before the Lok Sabha was dissolved so that in keeping with the law, the change could have been discussed and accepted or rejected by Parliament. But the change in rules altering the old system and providing for mixing of ballot papers was done not only after the Lok Sabha had been dissolved but also after the notification for the election had been made. There was no justification whatsoever for making such a vital change in the electoral

process in such an arbitrary manner. It does not go to the credit of the leadership of the democratic opposition parties that none of them opposed this change with due vehemence and persistence.

This change in rule about counting of votes was the first important plank of the operation murder democracy in India. The second step in this direction was the long time gap between polling and counting of votes in all the states except the three states in which Assembly elections were held simultaneously. This was contrary to earlier practice and was a necessary part of the rigging process.

The first information about the projected fraud on the Indian electorate accidentally reached a Delhi school teacher when he was going round for enrolling new voters in the Karol Bagh area of Delhi. When he approached an officer of the Government of India who lived in that area but whose name did not appear on the electoral rolls, to fill the form for adding his name to the voters' list, he casually remarked, "you mey enrol me and I will vote for your party but you are not going to win. This time chemicals will be employed and all your candidates will be defeated." Since the remark was made in a casual way, about a month before the election, the teacher *could not grasp its full import. But according to him, he did make a mention of the incident in a meeting of the workers of Delhi Jana Sangh soon after. But nobody, in*cluding the office bearers of Delhi State *Jana Sangh, took a* serious note of the information.

As the polling date approached, reports began to reach some of the opposition leaders and parties that some serious mischief was afoot to rig the elections. A few days before the polling a letter reached Jana Sangh office at Lucknow. It said that the writer of the letter was staying in a dak bungalow in the Rae Bareilly constituency from where Mrs. Gandhi was contesting. He over-heard some Congress high ups staying in the adjacent room talking about the certainty of Mrs. Gandhi's victory because of the use *of a certain percentage of* chemicalised ballot papers which would be *pre-stamped* in her favour. He thought it

his duty to convey the information to the major opposition party of the state and so he wrote that letter.

About the same time, wife of an official of the Ministry of Home Affairs of the Government of India disclosed similar information to a lady social worker of New Delhi, who immediately informed a prominent Jana Sangh leader from New Delhi, about it. Similar information reached Rajmata Vijay Raje Scindia also about the same time.

On March 2, three days before the polling was to begin in New Delhi, a chit came on the stage of a public meeting organised by Jana Sangh in Karol Bagh which was to be addressed by Shri A. B. Vajpayee. The chit said, "I am a senior officer of the Election Commission. I want to warn you that some serious mischief is being done in regard to ballot papers. Be on guard." The chit was received by *Shri Bhim Sen Bahri, a scientific worker, who happened to* be the stage secretary. He duly passed it on to Shri Ram Sarup Vidyarthi, the Jana Sangh candidate for Lok Sabha from Karol Bagh, who passed it on to Shri Vajpayee. On March 3, a young man met Shri Vidyarthi in his office and asked him if he had received the chit in the public meeting on the previous night. On getting answer in the affirmative, he gave him detailed information about the modus operandi of the contemplated fraud on the electorate. He told Mr. Vidyarthi that a certain percentage of ballot papers will be chemically treated and an invisible stamp will be affixed on cow and calf symbol of the Indira Congress. Stamp put by the voters in polling booths on such ballots will disappear because of that chemical and the invisible stamp on cow and calf symbol will become visible after some days. As a result of this double process all the Jana Sangh candidates in Delhi will be defeated. When Mr. Vidyarthi wanted to know the identity of that youngman, he understandably declined to disclose it.

It is difficult to believe how responsible people who got this information dismissed it as fantastic and took no step either to inform the public about it or even to take their senior colleagues, some of whom also happened to be candi-

dates in the election, about it. Whatever the reasons or factors which made all efforts of some conscientious officers to expose the projected fraud on the Indian electorate in time abortive, the persons who got the information and did nothing about it cannot be exonerated of the charge of complacency if not complicity, explicit or implicit, in the crime against Indian democracy committed during the 1971 elections to Lok Sabha.

The first concrete evidence of rigging of election came to light at the time of counting. A number of opposition candidates and their counting agents in Delhi, Bombay and elsewhere noted that stamp marks on cow and calf symbol on a large number of ballot papers appeared to be uniform, fresher and brighter than the stamps on other symbols. It was also noted that colour of such ballot papers was somewhat different from other ballots. The matter was brought to the notice of returning officers by a number of people including Shri Madhu Mehta, General Secretary of Swatantra Party, who was present at the counting of votes in one of the Lok Sabha constituencies of Bombay. But the returning officers expressed their inability to take legal cognizance of these observations. The victory of even the weakest candidates of the Indira Congress against strong candidates of the opposition with uniformly high margins came as a surprise not only to the people and the vanquished candidates but also to the winners. The people's disappointment at the results was demonstrated by non-celebration of Holi which fell the next day at most places where Congress candidates won with tremendous margins, including the metropolitan cities of Delhi and Bombay.

The first definite information about the fraud that had been perpetrated on the electorate came on the night of March 11, when a senior officer of an important department of Government burst into tears before two other officials and told them the whole story to unburden the load on his conscience.

This was followed by a spate of unsigned letters giving details of the fraud to important leaders of the opposition including Shri Nijlingappa, President of the Congress (O), Ch.

Charan Singh and the writer. The details given in some of these letters coming from authoritative sources were startling.

As the information started pouring in, the first thing the writer thought of was to apprise the President of India of all the facts with the request to act in the interest of the Constitution which he was under oath to uphold. Since the writer could not meet the President immediately, he wrote to the President on March 18, urging him to order a judicial probe into the conduct of the elections and appoint a commission of scientists to make chemical examination of ballot papers. It was also suggested that the oath of membership be not administered to the newly elected members of the Lok Sabha till the judicial commission gave its findings about fairness of the elections. The letter ended with an appeal in the following words:

"I would therefore urge upon you not as one who contested and lost but as a citizen of India who believes in democracy and wants Indian democracy to be safe and successful, to rise to the occasion and take immediate steps to resolve the mystery of the allegedly chemicalised ballot papers and remove the doubts and fears of the people about fairness of the elections."

Having received no reply from the President, except an acknowledgement of the letter, the writer made a request to the Chief Election Commissioner of India on March 30, 1971, under rule 93 of the Statutory Rules and Orders about elections to allow him inspection of the ballot papers of South Delhi Constituency to ascertain the truth about use of chemicalised ballot papers. The Election Commissioner rejected the request even though he had granted inspection to a number of other people under this very rulq. But in the course of his order refusing inspection of ballot papers to the writer he made the following significant remark.

"The story if true belongs to pre-poll period and has nothing to do with the counting of votes. The inspection of these ballot papers by itself will not help the petitioner in any way unless the ballot papers are put to a chemical test in a laboratory."

The refusal of inspection of ballot papers with this observation by the Election Commissioner should have been treated as a conclusive proof that there was some truth in the allegation about induction of chemically treated ballot papers. In view of wider import of the question, it was *the duty of democratic parties to take it up on the political level and apply every pressure to compel the government to order a judicial probe into the conduct of elections and chemical inspection of the ballot papers.* It does not redound to the credit of opposition parties including the Jana Sangh, the Congress (O), the P.S.P. and the Swatantra Party that none of them was prepared to take up this issue on a political level.

The only other way to have a limited probe into the matter was to go in for an election petition. The writer, therefore, filed an election petition in Delhi High Court on April 24, 1971 in which all the allegations about rigging of the election through induction of chemically treated ballot papers were recounted. It was *followed by* a prayer for *inspection of the ballot papers of the constituency in question. The dogged opposition of the opposite side* (Indira Congress) *to any* kind of inspection came as a surprise to the trial judge as well. He ordered inspection of ballot papers by his order of September 3, 1971.

Had there been no hanky panky, the ruling party should have welcomed the order about inspection of ballot papers. But being afraid of the truth to come out, the respondent party appealed to the Supreme Court against this order of inspection and got the stay order just a day before the inspection was to begin. At the Supreme Court Mr. Daftri, *who has since been nominated to the Rajya Sabha, opposed any kind of inspection, and particularly a chemical inspection* of ballot papers, on behalf of the ruling party. But Justice Hegde and Justice Khanna in their judgment of October 22, 1971, dismissed the appeal but modified the order of the trial court in so far as they ordered a sample inspection of a few hundred ballot papers before a general inspection was ordered. In the course of their judgment the *learned judges observed:*

"The march of science in recent years has shown that what was thought to be impossible just a few years back has become an easy possibility now. What we would have thought as wild imagination some years back is now proved to be realities. Hence we are unable to reject the allegations of the election petitioner without scrutiny. We shall accept nothing and reject nothing except on satisfactory proof."

"Herein we are not merely concerned about the validity of elections in the two constituencies. They are no doubt important but in the context of things their importance pales into insignificance. What is more important is the survival of the very democratic institution on which our way of life depends."

"Any attempt to obstruct an enquiry into the allegations made may give an impression that there might be some truth in the allegations made."

"The strength of democratic society depends on the knowledge of its ordinary citizens about the affairs of the institutions created to safeguard their rights."

"But at the same time serious allegations cannot be dismissed summarily merely because they do not look probable. Prudence requires a cautious approach in these matters. In all these matters the court's aim should be to render complete justice between the parties. Further, if the allegations made raise issues of public importance, greater care and circumspection is necessary".

In compliance with the judgment of the Supreme Court the trial judge, Justice Andley of Delhi High Court, made a sample inspection of 800 ballot papers cast in favour of the Indira Congress candidate and 550 cast in favour of Jana Sangh candidate, the writer, taken out of the bags containing them at random.

At the very first sight of the two sets of ballot papers, they revealed some difference in their colour. While all but five ballot papers cast in writer's favour were found to be white, almost all the ballot papers cast in favour of the ruling Congress were found to be "off white" in the language of the

court. This confirmed the observation made at the time of counting and the information supplied by some of those who had acted as instruments of the powers that be, but whose conscience pricked them to reveal the truth. The court was therefore requested to allow chemical inspection of brownish or "off white" ballot papers. That the court was inclined to accede to this request was clear from the trial judge's query as to how many ballot papers should be chemically examined. He also asked the writer to keep his scientist and formula ready for chemical examination and reserved his order for November 12. It was expected by every one present in the court that day that chemical inspection of suspected ballot papers will be allowed. But the judgment could not be delivered on November 12 as the court was closed on that day because of sudden death of a judge of the Supreme Court. Prime Minister Mrs. Gandhi who had been abroad also returned to New Delhi on the same date.

The judgment came as a complete surprise to all those who had been present in the court on November 8 and 9 when visual inspection and arguments had taken place. The learned trial judge not only rejected the request for chemical inspection of ballot papers but also struck off the issue of induction of chemically treated ballot papers from the election petition itself.

The writer then decided not to proceed with the petition in the trial court. After it was dismissed he went in appeal to the Supreme Court with the plea that the suspected ballot papers be chemically examined. The writer argued the case in person on August 9, 1972 and made every possible effort to persuade the court to allow chemical inspection of the ballot papers so that the truth or otherwise of the allegation about rigging of elections through induction of chemically treated ballot papers be proved or disproved. The only evidence in this case, he pleaded, were the ballots. Whether they had been chemically treated or not could be proved only through a chemical examination of such ballot papers in a laboratory. It was also pleaded that when in case of forged documents or currency notes all kinds of tests were undertaken, it was all the more imperative that such tests should

be done when the ballot papers on which the fate of the whole country depends were alleged to be forged. But all the pleadings of the writer to allow chemical inspection of suspected ballot papers went in vain. The judgment of the trial court was upheld.

In fact the issue involved was not legal or technical. It was a political issue. The allegation was not about any electoral malpractice but about rigging of the election on a large scale. The truth or otherwise of it could be found only if a judicial probe of the entire conduct of election had been ordered and all ballot papers used in the election had been preserved and tested in a laboratory. This could have been achieved only if sufficient political pressure had been put on the government. As things are, most of the ballot papers have already been destroyed and the ballot papers used in South Delhi Constituency will also be soon destroyed. That will destroy the only relevant evidence in the matter.

But that in itself cannot suppress the truth. Some of those who were used as instruments for perpetrating the colossal fraud on the Indian electorate and murdering Indian democracy are bound to speak out one day. Their conscience must be pricking them and goading them to do the right things. Some information, in fact, has already started trickling into the press.

Rigging of elections through chemical processes is not something new or unknown. This was done in Indonesia and Ghana when Sukarno and Nkrumah wanted to perpetuate their dictatorship.

A logical corollary of such a fraud on the electorate, if it has really been played, is that there shall be no elections in the real sense in future, and that there shall be no democracy in the country. Such a thing cannot remain hidden and unrecompensed in a free and democratic country for long.

But the fact remains that a Lok Sabha majority which has not been elected through indisputably fair and free elections cannot claim to be a legitimate majority and the government formed on the basis of such majority cannot claim to be a legitimate government.

Elections of 1971 gave Mrs. Gandhi a two-thirds majority in the Lok Sobha. It was beyond the most optimistic expectations of Shri Jagjivan Ram, the then president of Indira Congress, and other top leaders of that party. The maximum they expected was about 280 seats in a house of 521. So they did not conceal their surprise at the unexpected results. But when Mrs. Gandhi was asked by a correspondent at the first press conference she addressed after the Lok Sabha elections, if she too was surprised at the results of the election, she significantly replied that she was not surprised and that her colleagues felt surprised because "they never knew my mind".

That is a fact. The plan to rig the elections must have been a closely guarded secret and no non-communist colleague of Mrs. Gandhi, including her party president and Defence Minister, Shri Jagjivan Ram, was privy to it.

That this fraud had been perpetrated only in those States where assembly elections had been delinked from Lok Sabha elections or where there was no time lag between polling and counting became clear from a comparison of the Lok Sabha results in West Bengal, Orissa, Tamil Nadu and Kerala with the Lok Sabha results in other States. In West Bengal C.P.M. was able to capture 20 out of 40 seats. In Orissa Swatantra Party did equally well. What was more significant was the narrow margins with which candidates lost or won in these states. Even in Tamil Nadu where DMK swept the polls the difference in votes polled by D.M.K. and Congress (O) votes was quite narrow. But as against this the Congress candidates in other States uniformly won by high margins of about one lakh. It was this pattern of voting in such States which conclusively pointed to some definite plan of rigging the elections.

CHAPTER XII

Towards Totalitarianism

Having secured a brute majority in which besides 350 members of her own party, she could always bank on about 50 members of the C.P.I., D.M.K. and a number of independents sitting on the opposition benches, Mrs. Gandhi set herself to the task of completing the operation murder democracy by taking steps to tamper with the other two pillars of democracy to clear the decks for the establishment of a totalitarian regime.

The first requisite for this was that she must concentrate all real power in her own hands and have a cabinet of yesmen. No dictator or would-be dictator can brook equals.

With the general feeling in the Congress Parliamentary Party which now had a good number of fellow travellers that the Congress victory was primarily due to Indira wind or "mind", there was no question of any compulsion for her to include or exclude any person from her cabinet. But she was not the monarch of all she surveyed yet. She still had a number of headaches and hurdles—most important of them was Shri Jagjivan Ram who, apart from being the President of the party, happened to be the seniormost and most experienced man in the Congress Parliamentary Party. He had his own roots and the scheduled caste members looked upon him as their natural leader. It was well known even before the elections that Mrs. Gandhi was building up Mr. Sanjivayya, a younger scheduled caste leader from Andhra Pradesh, as potential replacement for Shri Jagjivan Ram.

Shri Jagjivan Ram is too shrewd a person to have not read Mrs. Gandhi's mind and ideas. So when Mrs. Gandhi asked him to opt either for Presidentship of the Congress or inclusion in the Cabinet, he chose to remain a Minister. From his experience he knew that as a Minister he could have some power and influence while as Congress President he had to be just a rubber stamp. This upset the plan of Mrs. Gandhi. She had to include him in the cabinet. Shri Y.B. Chavan, the other senior minister of the old cabinet, was none of a problem for her. He had proved to be a damp squib when he was divested of Home portfolio. He wanted to be a minister at any price and in any capacity. Barring these two old hands, there was none in the Congress Party who had any independent standing or backing. All of them were entirely at her mercy.

In the new set up Mrs. Gandhi took under her direct charge the Ministries of Home Affairs and Information and Broadcasting besides general administration, planning and atomic energy. This combination of Home and Information with Premiership was as unprecedented as it was indicative of the shape of things to come. Shri Chavan retained Finance but his wings were further clipped by 'taking economic intelligence and company affairs out of his charge. Shri Jagjivan Ram became the Defence Minister. Other ministers did not matter at all. But for the first time a good number of fellow travellers were given ministerial berths.

Even more significant than the composition of the new cabinet was the new role assigned to Prime Minister's Secretariat which was strengthened by the addition of Shri P. N. Dhar, as economic adviser. Shri D. P. Dhar was recalled from Moscow after the elections and was made Chairman of the Policy Planning cell in the Ministry of External Affairs with the rank of a Minister. This appointment relegated the External Affairs Minister, Shri Swaran Singh, to the position of a dignified clerk and made Shri D. P. Dhar, a close confidant of Mrs. Gandhi—de facto Foreign Minister. The Prime Minister's secretariat which now included Shri P. N. Haksar, Shri P. N. Dhar and Shri R. N. Kao besides Shri D. P. Dhar and Shri T. N. Kaul, who acted as her adviser in regard

to foreign affairs, now began to act as a super cabinet. All important matters pertaining to all ministries began to be processed through it. Incidentally all the five members of this inner cabinet or inner circle of Mrs. Gandhi happened to be drawn from a single one lakh strong community to which Mrs. Gandhi herself belongs in a country of 550 million people. This is a peculiar phenomenon.

Having built the power apparatus, she began to operate through it dexterously. There were some hurdles to her assuming absolute power. One was the leadership of different states which under the Constitution were autonomous and enjoyed a wide sphere of action and influence. Some of the States like Gujrat, U.P., Punjab, Mysore and Orissa and the Union Territory of Delhi had governments of opposition parties, while others like Rajasthan, Andhra Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh had Chief Ministers who had either sided with the old guard of the Congress Party at the time of Presidential election or were known to be too independent and well entrenched to be considered dependable tools of the Centre. So moves were started to get President's rule or Chief Ministers of her choice imposed on these states. With the usual carrot and the stick, defections were brought about in Gujrat, Mysore and Orissa which were put under President's rule. Chief Ministers of Mrs. Gandhi's choice were imposed on Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh and financial *squeeze was applied to tame or cow* down Punjab and Delhi. D.M.K. Government of Tamil Nadu was treated as a case apart.

Along with this operation squeeze on the state governments, steps began to be taken to tamper with the other two pillars of democracy through amending the constitution and openly declared plans to curb the freedom of the press and rushing through pieces of legislation aimed at curtailing freedom of thought and expression.

The most significant of the many amendments to the constitution made by the Parliament during the last one year are the 24th and the 25th amendments. The 25th amendment has watered down the right to property guaran-

teed by the constitution by substituting the word "amount" for compensation to be paid for the property acquired for public purpose and by making the quantum of this amount thus *paid non-justiciable.* With wide meaning put on "for public purpose" this amendment has virtually taken away the right to property. This is in keeping with socialism or state capitalism according to which *all* property and means of production and distribution must be controlled by the State, i.e., the person or persons who control the administrative apparatus of the state and wield the power to coerce.

The 24th amendment has restored to the Parliament the right to abridge fundamental rights and has thus negatived the famous decision of the Supreme Court in Golak Nath *case which had debarred parliament from abridging fundamental* rights.

With these two amendments of the constitution, the state can extend its economic and political squeeze on all including the press with complete impunity. The proposed legislation about diffusion of ownership of newspapers, the ten-page restriction on all major newspapers, and politically motivated distribution of government advertisements coupled with threats of victimisation and prosecution has already reduced the Indian press, which had a tradition of independence, to near subservience to the powers that be. With the growing control of the government on the economic life of the people and changes in the criminal law, freedom of thought and expression of the individual has also been very much circumscribed. This, coupled with the complete state control over All India Radio *and Television, the only effective* mass media in a country where newspapers can be read only by a small fraction of the population, has given the *government such control* over the minds and bodies of the people as can be matched only by totalitarian states of the communist world or military dictatorships of West Asia and Latin America.

The clamour about committed judiciary and bureaucracy, appointment of new judges on the basis of commitmen rather than *merit* and *the allurement of post-retire-*

ment assignments has done all to seriously compromise the independence of the judiciary.

As against this unprecedented power that she concentrated in her hands in the name of the people, she could do precious little to ameliorate the lot of the common man who was supposed to have voted for her on the basis of her "Garibi Hatao" slogan and programme. The prices continued to rise and economy remained stagnant. But with mass media at her command, she could divert the attention of the people from these pressing and practical problems in the name of developments in Bangla Desh and influx of millions of refugees from there.

The developments in Bangla Desh were fully exploited by her and her Soviet friends to tighten their grip on the country through the Indo-Soviet Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation signed on August 9, 1971 at New Delhi. According to the statement of the Minister of External Affairs in the Lok Sabha after the signing of the treaty, negotiations for this treaty had been going on for over two years. They began with the announcement of Breznev doctrine of collective security in Asia. That doctrine and the treaty arrangement that Soviet Union wanted to make with India in pursuant of that doctrine was not acceptable to the 4th Lok Sabha as the debate in Lok Sabha on the subject had clearly revealed. It can now be reasonably assumed that the plan to dissolve the 4th Lok Sabha before time and have a rigged election to get a packed majority was part of the Soviet strategy to push the Indo-Soviet Treaty and the Breznev doctrine down the throat of India. The senseless attitude adopted by the Nixon administration towards India in the context of Bangla Desh developments also helped both Mrs. Gandhi and the Soviet leadership in the prosecution of their plans.

The revelations made by President Anwar Sadat of Egypt about the way President Podgorny got the Soviet-Egypt Treaty of friendship and cooperation signed by the Egyptian leaders leave little room for doubt about the real

motives and methods employed by Kremlin to get the Indo-Soviet Treaty signed.

The total demoralisation of the democratic opposition parties which, there are reasons to believe, have been infiltrated by fellow travellers and communist agents, further helped Mrs. Gandhi and her allies in their plans. The success of the Indian Police Action in Bangla Desh in December, 1971, when Pakistan unleashed unprovoked war on India in the West, and the way Indian armed forces acquitted themselves on the Western front, where real fighting took place, gave another opportunity to Mrs. Gandhi and her communist allies to project her as the only leader before the gullible masses of India. *The shameful contribution of some of the top opposition leaders to this planned programme of image making of Mrs. Gandhi on the communist style gave* new strength and prestige to the tough lady. The A.I.R., the Television and the demoralised and subservient press all joined hands to project her as a successful hero. Her party men supplemented this campaign of image making through posters and slogans like "Indira is India"; "one country, one party and one leader". This created the right atmosphere for Mrs. Gandhi to extend her absolute power to the states as well.

State Assembly elections which were due in February, 1972 had been postponed when Pakistan declared war, under pressure of public opinion. Election campaign on party lines would have impaired the atmosphere of unity that all parties had contributed to build for war effort on a national scale.

The premature and unilateral cease-fire of December 17, 1971 was immediately followed by the announcement to hold assembly elections in early March. Obviously Mrs. Gandhi and her communist allies wanted to exploit the national victory won by the sacrifice of thousands of jawans and officers of the Indian Armed Forces for extending the total control of Mrs. Gandhi on the states as well.

CHAPTER XIII

States Reduced to 'Subedaris'

Democracy to be real and effective must function at different levels through different institutions from village Panchayat to Lok Sabha at the centre with equitable distribution of power and decentralisation of authority. Any system of totalitarianism on the other hand demands concentration of all real power at one centre in the hands of one person. A federal system of government with division of powers between the centre and the states in which every state and its elected legislature and government are virtually autonomous within the sphere of powers and functions assigned to them cannot fit in with totalitarianism. That is the rationale of the so-called "democratic centralism" to which communist states all over the world are wedded. It is significant that Communist Party of India which had so far been talking of fourteen nations in India and advocating more powers and greater autonomy to the States has started decrying the demands for more power to the States and decentralisation of power as a bourgeois concept and wants in the words of its Chairman, Shri S. A. Dange, "democratic centralism whose content tries to come up before the people when the left and democratic forces succeed in capturing the local state power or acquire weightage in Parliament".[1] Bringing of all the states in line with and under direct authority of the central leadership by putting chosen yesmen at the helm of affairs in the states is essential feature of democratic centra-

1. Democratic Centralism by S.A. Dange in weekly "Round Table" of August 15, 1972.

lism. The election to the State assemblies held in March 1972 provided the occasion and opportunity to Mrs. Gandhi to achieve that end.

State Assembly elections in three states Kerala, Tamil Nadu and Orissa had been completed in 1971 along with the Lok Sabha elections. Kerala since then had a Congress Communist-Muslim League Coalition Ministry with a C.P.I. man as Chief Minister. Therefore Kerala could be said to have fallen in line with the centre. D.M.K. had staged a come back with increased majority in Tamil Nadu Assembly in 1971 election. Indira Congress had not put up any candidate for the Assembly as a part of its deal with the D.M.K. which is not only wedded to State autonomy but also wants to enlarge it in the light of the recommendations of Rajmannar Committee appointed by it to go into the centre-state relations. An effective D.M.K. Government and leadership in Tamil Nadu, therefore, cannot fit in very well with a Central authority working for "democratic centralism". A clash between the two is unavoidable. Things are already moving in that direction.

In Orissa where no party secured a clear majority in 1971 elections, the attempt to have an Indira Congress Government with the support of Utkal Congress of Biju Patnaik having failed, a coalition government of Swatantra Party and Utkal Congress with Shri Biswanath Das, a veteran Congressman who had been returned as as independent, was installed in power. Efforts to topple it and replace it with a government under a dependable minion of Mrs. Gandhi began soon after the coalition government was formed. They succeeded after 1972 elections when the coalition government was toppled by securing defections of some Swatantra and Utkal Congress members. Mrs. Nandani Satpathy, a known fellow traveller, has since been imposed as Subedar of Delhi Durbar on Orissa.

Of the remaining state assemblies, elections to U.P., Bihar, Haryana and Punjab State Assemblies were not due in 1972 because they had mid-term elections in 1969. But conditions were created to have elections in Punjab, Haryana and Bihar along with other States. Uttar Pradesh legis-

lators saved themselves from going through the mill of another election in 1972 by creating conditions for a government of Mrs. Gandhi's party with a conformist Chief Minister to be installed in power.

Mrs. Gandhi entered the arena of State elections in 1972 with distinct and effective advantage over other parties. The victory of the Indian armed forces in Bangla Desh and their success in not only halting the Pak offensive in the West but also in capturing about five thousand square miles of Pak territory in the bargain was projected by the controlled mass media as a victory of Mrs. Indira Gandhi who got the title of "Bharat Ratna" conferred on herself in a dramatic move to monopolise all credit for the success in the war. The Defence Minister, Shri Jagjivan Ram, and the chiefs of the three Services were given a grudging recognition only when popular disapproval of self-aggrandisement by the Prime Minister at the cost of the real architects of victory became vocal. Some of the opposition leaders also helped in the creation of mass hysteria in favour of Mrs. Gandhi by showering superlative praises on her to the great embarrassment of their own parties. Their certificates and eulogies came very handy to Indira Congress during the elections which were fought by it only in the name of Mrs. Gandhi and victory in the war with Pakistan.

The second factor in favour of Mrs. Gandhi was the total demoralisation of opposition parties. The massive propaganda campaign started by the Indira Congress and the government controlled mass media ascribing the defeat of the opposition parties in 1971 to their electoral alliance and their opposition to the statist policies of the government such as indiscriminate and arbitrary nationalisation of banks was aimed at misleading the people and putting the opposition parties off the track of the fraud perpetrated on the electorate. It does little credit to the calibre, maturity and political acumen of the leaders of the opposition parties in general and of Jana Sangh, the only party in the field with some teeth, in particular, that they allowed themselves to be carried away by this propaganda. Instead of analysing the real causes of defeat and diagnosing the disease which re-

sulted in the steady decline of the Jana Sangh since 1967 elections, they began to delude themselves that they had lost because radical policies and slogans of Indira Congress had greater appeal for the people. So they too began to copy the Congress slogans in the fond hope that that will improve their image with the electorate. But in fact this strategy of imitating the Congress slogans and deifying Mrs. Gandhi did the greatest damage to the Jana Sangh which had built a distinct image over the years. It impaired its credibility and lost a good chunk of its supporters and committed votes.

Another mistake of some of the opposition parties, particularly the Jana Sangh, was that they decided to contest Assembly elections on local and provincial issues to the exclusion of national issues on the plea that national issues have relevance only in the election to Lok Sabha. This was a grave folly. Mrs. Gandhi on the other hand ignored local issues and laid stress on victory in Bangla Desh and necessity of bringing the states in line with the centre which, according to her, could be possible only if the states had the governments which could toe her line.

But with all these advantages the position of Indira Congress even in 1972 was not as strong as it was made out to be by its apologists and publicists. This was particularly the case in Delhi, the national metropolis, where a Jana Sangh administration had done real good work which had earned it praise and respect of the people in general. Even in other states there was growing disillusionment with Mrs. Gandhi's slogans because of continuous rise in prices and growing corruption and nepotism.

The policy of leaving a number of seats for C.P.I. even where it had little strength of its own and open partiality in favour of fellow travellers in the matter of distributing Congress tickets created a lot of discontent and heart burning in important sections of the Congress Party in different states. That Bangla Desh victory had not much impact on the general mass of the voters particularly in the rural areas was amply demonstrated by the bye-election to Lok Sabha from Darbhanga held just two months before the

general election of 1972. It was well known that the Congress candidate, Shri L. N. Mishra, Minister of Foreign Trade in Mrs. Gandhi's cabinet, could win the seat only because of money power, misuse of official machinery and unabashed appeal to casteism to secure Brahmin and scheduled caste votes and to communalism to secure Muslim votes.

Darbhanga bye-election became the pattern for Assembly elections of 1972 just as the bye-election at Maniram just before the 1971 election set the pattern for Lok Sabha elections of 1971. The experiment of rigging through use of chemicalised ballot papers was, according to well informed sources, first tried in Maniram.

When even popular euphoria about victory in war, money power and misuse of official machinery was found to be ineffective in certain constituencies in Delhi, West Bengal and elsewhere, police was asked to lend a hand in master-minding the plan to win elections anyhow. A number of devices were used to that end. In certain constituencies of West Bengal voters were virtually driven out of the polling booths and the ballot boxes were filled with ballots stamped in favour of Congress candidates. In Delhi different kinds of inks were supplied at different polling booths of the same constituency which gave rise to the suspicion that rigging on a limited scale and with greater care in regard to the number of forged ballot papers inducted, was resorted to.

Even though it is admitted at all hands that Mrs. Gandhi's prestige stood much higher in 1972, that Bangla Desh victory had given Indira Congress a distinct advantage over other parties which lacked resources as well and that official machinery including police force was used on an unprecedented scale in favour of the ruling party in 1972 elections, opposition parties in most states could secure higher percentage of votes as compared to 1971 election. In Delhi the Jana Sangh vote went up by 10% as compared to 1971 elections. This provided another conclusive proof that the results of 1971 elections were not a correct index of the popular mind.

The net result of all the acts of commission of Indira

Congress and omission of the opposition parties was that Indira Congress won a decisive victory in all the states except Goa, Manipur and Meghalaya where Indira Congress did not contest all the seats. Mrs. Indira Gandhi could well claim it to be her personal victory and was accepted as such by the victors and the vanquished alike. Congress organisation and Congress President, Shri Sanjivayya, were nowhere in the picture. Congress candidates and their workers asked votes not for the candidates or the Congress party but for Mrs. Gandhi.

The money to fight elections also came from or through her. The victory of the Congress therefore was literally the victory of and for Mrs. Gandhi.

Mrs. Gandhi took full advantage of the situation. She nominated the Chief Ministers for Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Gujrat, Mysore, Bihar and other states, some of whom were not even members of state assemblies, who were dutifully elected leaders of the Congress legislature parties of the respective states. They had no free hand in the matter of choosing their cabinet colleagues. All the State Ministers were also chosen by Mrs. Gandhi or her confidants at the centre in her name. The Chief Executive Councillor for Delhi was also nominated by her even though he was not an elected member of the Delhi Metropolitan Council.

As things are most of the States have been reduced to satrapies and their Chief Ministers have been reduced to the position of Subedars appointed by the grand Mughal from Delhi. Such Chief Ministers cannot be expected to have a mind or will of their own. They must carry out the orders from Delhi. Thus 'democratic centralism' on the Communist model has been put in operation in practice.

No wonder that this success and absolute power has gone to Mrs. Gandhi's head. All power is now concentrated in her hands and is exercised through her inner circle to the chagrin of the cabinet ministers and their secretaries alike. They have been reduced to the position of errand boys and dignified clerks.

This was clearly demonstrated at the time of Simla summit between her and the President of Pakistan, Mr. Bhutto, in July, 1972. She took her cabinet colleagues for granted. They dutifully rubber-stamped her decision.

The only people who knew her mind or the vice versa were the Communist Party of India and its foreign mentors. This is proved by a comparison of Simla Agreement with resolution of the politbureau of C.P.I. passed sometime earlier. That resolution reflected the thinking of the Soviet Government. It wanted India to be generous to Pakistan, vacate Pak territory and accept cease-fire line in Jammu and Kashmir as international frontier between India and Pakistan.

· It is thus clear that a virtual dictatorship has been established in India under the aegis of Soviet Union in a seemingly constitutional way. The trappings of democracy are still there but spirit is gone. The casual way in which the Constitution is being amended again and again has destroyed all its sanctity as the organic law of the country. Freedom of the press is being eroded and the All India Radio has been virtually changed into All Indira Radio. The talk of committed judiciary and the power to appoint judges of High Courts and Supreme Court and partisan distribution of favours to the judges after retirement has very much affected the independence of the judiciary. The persistent refusal of the government to re-constitute the Election Commission, revert to the earlier rules about counting of votes and introduce punching instead of stamping the ballot papers point to its determination not to have free and fair elections in the country any more.

This situation cannot remain static for long. Either things will get worse and democracy in India will go the way it went in Indonesia and Ghana under Soekarno and Nkrumah or the trend will be reversed under pressure from within and outside the Congress Party. The rumblings in Bihar, Mysore and Uttar Pradesh and growing but still mute discontent in the Congress Party, permanent services and the people at large with the undemocratic ways of the Prime

Minister and her inner circle may create a situation in which democracy may assert itself once again.

In any case a big question mark has been put on the future of democracy in India. The factors for and against its survival therefore demand immediate consideration of all democrats in India.

CHAPTER XIV

Future of Democracy in India

The foregoing study of the politics of freedom and the course of parliamentary democracy in India after freedom clearly points to the perils with which Indian democracy is beset and creates serious doubts and misgiving about its future. The greatest threat to democracy in India has come from none else but the daughter of the man who had nursed the sapling of democracy in India with assiduous care in its most critical and formative period.

Mrs. Indira Gandhi has no commitment to democracy. In fact she is committed to nothing, not even to her forebears and her party, except herself. She was born with a silver spoon and has been living with a gold spoon in her mouth from her early childhood. The fact of her being the only child of a doting father with family background of the Nehru's has added imperiousness and a faith in some kind of divine right to rule over India to the unbounded ambition and desire for personal power. The way she has been cutting the hands that fed her political ambition, the way she launched operation murder democracy' in 1971, the way she has thrown all moral values and norms of decent and democratic public behaviour to the winds and the type of people whom she has collected around her, bode ill not only for the country and democracy but for her own position as well. She seems to be prepared to side even with the devil and mortgage the long range interests of the country to those who are acting as her main prop since 1971 elections.

That the C.P.I. and the Soviet Union have no use for

"bourgeois" democracy and would do everything to subvert it and replace it by a totalitarian regime on the Soviet model requires no amplification. They can achieve the end they have in view only by keeping Mrs. Gandhi in power so long as it suits them. So even with all her imperiousness and self-willed nature she cannot be expected to stand up to them even if they go beyond the convenient limits in arm twisting and meddling with Indian affairs. The fact that fellow travellers and ex-card holders, including those who occupied responsible positions in the C.P.I. till the other day, now occupy key positions in the Congress organisation and government and the growing dependence on Soviet Union which has virtually sucked India into her orbit since the signing of the Indo-Soviet Treaty in 1971 are significant pointers to the decline of democracy and rise of forces of totalitarianism in the country.

The statist policies that Indian Government has been following in the name of socialism and its increasing hold on the economic life of the people is steadily liquidating self-employed middle class, the back bone of a democratic society, and creating a new class of people with a vested interest in State capitalism. This is a contributory factor for the destruction of democratic norms, values and conventions which sustain the structure of democracy and put life in it.

The total demoralisation of the "democratic" opposition parties is facilitating and accelerating this process. The Organisation Congress with all the old guards at its helm has been behaving like a sinking ship whose crew has lost all hope of survival. As a result its leaders and legislators at the state level have been jumping from it in a desperate bid to get a berth in the Indira Congress if they can. It is having its effect on its central leadership as well. It has already let slip the opportunity to give this party an image distinct and different from Nehruite image of India Congress. As things are Congress (O) cannot become the focal point of democratic opposition in the country.

The Swatantra Party has proved to be really "Swatantra" in the literal sense of the term. It has allowed the appeal of its economic ideology to be corroded and clouded

by its lack of emotional appeal. For it the man is only an economic man. Its lack of organisational cohesion and its rapid decline in terms of seats and votes has completely blurred its image even in the eyes of those whose aspirations it claimed to represent.

Bhartiya Jana Sangh is the only non-Socialist Party in the field which has a cadre of workers and a fairly well-knit organisational structure. It had a distinct ideological appeal as well. These factors resulted in its steady growth and improvement of its position both in terms of votes and seats during the first four general elections. Its performance in the 4th general election of 1967 marked it out to be the only potential alternative to the Congress Party. But it allowed its ideological appeal to be eroded when it made opportunistic alliance with Communists after 1967 elections to form non-Congress coalitions in some states. The ideological drift that began at that time has continued unabated ever since. Its leadership has been trying to out-Herod Herod in raising secularist and socialist slogans in the fond hope that it will be thus accepted as progressive and secular by the so-called progressives and secularists of the Congress-Communist Camp. Actually this has had quite the opposite effect. To those whom it suits to dub Jana Sangh as communal and reactionary, all these attempts of Jana Sangh leadership to assume a socialist garb have made no difference. They continue to dub it as communal and reactionary. But those who looked upon Jana Sangh as the party of unalloyed nationalism opposed to statist policies of the Congress, the dilution of the Jana Sangh ideology has come as a shock and disillusionment. The distinctiveness of the Jana Sangh is gone.

The different factions of the erstwhile Socialist Party of India are continuing a precarious existence. But the raison d'etre for their continuance as separate parties has disappeared. Had they merged in Indira Congress soon after the split in the Congress party, they might have acted as a check on the growing hold of communists and their fellow travellers on Mrs. Gandhi and her party. Now they have become more or less irrelevant. With the exception of

the Lohia faction now led by Shri Raj Narain, their absorption in Indira Congress is only a question of time.

Had these parties continued to work together after 1971 election to Lok Sabha and made an effort to force the hands of Mrs. Gandhi to order a judicial probe into the conduct of 1971 elections and a chemical examination of the ballots, they could have exposed the fraud by which Mrs. Gandhi had come to power, and thus saved Indian democracy. Their failure to do so not only betrayed a woeful lack of vision and guts but also created doubts about their professions about democracy. To leave the matter to the courts which could be approached only through election petitions was to sidetrack the real issue which was political and not legal. The question of rigging of elections is a political and not a legal question and could have been dealt effectively on the political plane alone. By failing to raise their little finger to unearth and expose the fraud perpetrated on the electorate by rigging of the elections by Mrs. Gandhi, the existing leadership of the opposition parties has laid itself open to the charge of abetment in the murder of democracy in the country. *None of these parties can displace the Congress and provide the much needed alternative. And it is doubtful* whether they can work together even if they so decide after having denounced one another in such strong language after the failure in the elections of 1971.

This weakness and mutual distrust of the democratic opposition parties has made them ineffective as a check on the totalitarian trends and dictatorial proclivities of Mrs. Gandhi.

The moral rot that has set in has not left leaders of the opposition parties untouched. Mrs. Gandhi and her mentors have been moving in the true Kautilayan fashion. They know that in the present atmosphere of laxity, most politicians have their price, and they are prepared to pay it. That explains the growing feeling that Mrs. Gandhi *has her men* in all parties. *This crisis of character has created a crisis of confidence. People's faith in politicians* has been shaken. They have begun to consider them as chips of the same block. This general devaluation of political parties and

political leaders suits Mrs. Gandhi. Since she happens to be in power, her faults can be ignored because in the words of Tulsidas, "The powerful are above blemish".[1]

In a country where worship of the rising sun is an old tradition, where mass media is controlled by the State and where the so-called intellectuals have become no less a purchasable commodity than the general run of the politicians, it is comparatively easy for any one controlling the state apparatus and power to coerce, to brow-beat and establish dictatorship.

These are the negative factors which point to a dismal future of democracy in India of today.

But there are some positive factors, some old and some new, which are like the silver lining in a cloudy sky. Their effectiveness and strength has not yet been fully realised by the powers that be. But they can still turn the tables on them and save democracy.

The most important of such factors is the long tradition of freedom of thought inherent in Indian culture. Conformism to any set views or pattern of thought is as repugnant to Indian ethos and genius as conformism to any particular form of worship. That explains the existence of and tolerance for dissent even when the dominant thought, authority or sect appeared to be all powerful. That partly explains the failure of conformist and monolithic religions like Islam and Christianity to sway this country in the past and that is the greatest hurdle in the way of Communism, the new monolithic religion of our times, getting a grip over this ancient country. No Indian worth his salt can brook regimentation of thought for which totalitarianism of the communist brand stands. This is a factor with which any would-be dictator in this country will have to reckon.

The second factor for democracy in India is the long tradition of democratic institutions like village panchayats and the more recent tradition of representative institutions of the British pattern. The Parliament, the State Legislative

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1. समरथ को न दोष गोसाईं ।

Assemblies and such other organs of democratic life have been in existence long enough to take roots in the Indian soil and it will not be easy for any one to do away with them. Even the communist parties, particularly those of their leaders who have been in the legislatures, have developed a fancy and vested interest in the continuation and effective working of such institutions. Freedom is an experience which cannot be transferred. Those who have had the taste of it will be ill at ease when they have real experience of totalitarianism.

Even more important than the above two factors is the vested interest that the lower and under-privileged classes and castes of India have developed in continuance of democracy. Whether it was foreign rule or the rule of Indian kings and princes, the power in India had remained concentrated in upper castes. Casteism has gone so deep that in the words of Shri Jagjivan Ram, "it cuts across parties and even religions". One strong point of Mrs. Gandhi like her father is that she is a high caste Brahmin by birth. Most Brahmins even in the opposition parties feel flattered that the reins of power in the country are in the hands of a Brahmin. Even Brahmin converts to Christianity and other religions feel like that. Mrs. Gandhi on her part has carefully nursed the feeling that her rule is a high-caste rule by keeping only high-caste people within her circle.

But in a democracy based on adult franchise this situation cannot last long. Brahmins are just a small minority in the country. They therefore cannot monopolise power in their hands in the name of the people, most of whom belong to lower castes. With the growing political consciousness and understanding of the power of the vote the lower castes have begun asserting their right to have a dominant share in the governance of the country. That explained the virtual end of Brahmin hegemony over the politics and power apparatus of not only the Southern states but also of Bihar and U.P. after 1967 elections. Mrs. Gandhi has successfully tried to reverse that process. She has brought back Brahmins to key positions both at the centre and most of the states. If she is able to consolidate her position as a virtual dictator,

it would also mean consolidation of the power of Brahmins to the exclusion of the people of less privileged castes and classes. As this realisation grows, and it is growing, there is bound to be resistance to her style of politics from the lower classes. They can come up and have a share in power only if India remains a democratic state. Therefore the common people in whose name Mrs. Gandhi wants to wield absolute power may ultimately prove to be her undoing.

The developing economic situation in the country which is anti-thesis of the high expectations raised by Mrs. Gandhi by her slogans like 'Garibi Hatao' and Socialism and the growing corruption, nepotism and unemployment in the country may force even the gullible people to have a second thought about the real aim of the statist economic policies of the government. The resultant discontent of the people can even create conditions of anarchy and chaos.

More serious than the discontent in the common people is the discontent among the services, both senior and junior. The rising prices are hitting them the hardest. Higher ranks of the services are annoyed by the concentration of power in the hands of a few functionaries of Mrs. Gandhi's secretariat. The clannishness of the pandit clique around her and its tendency to make hay while the sun shines, coupled with Simla Agreement which all patriots consider to be a betrayal of their patriotism and sacrifices is creating a situation which may not prove to be very conducive to the consolidation of personal power by Mrs. Gandhi, the Soviet backing notwithstanding.

A few people in the top rungs of bureaucracy also know all about the rigging of the elections. Some of them were used as instruments for perpetrating the fraud on the nation in 1971 elections. At least they know that the present Lok Sabha majority does not reflect the will of the people and the Government of Mrs. Gandhi is not a legitimate government of the people.

There are only two ways by which this fraud on the nation can be exposed. One is to subject the ballot papers used in 1971 elections to chemical tests in a laboratory under

the guidance of reputed and independent scientists. But since the ballot papers have been destroyed after the decision of the courts not to order chemical inspection of such ballot papers, this evidence may be deemed to have been destroyed for all time.

The only other way is that some of the persons who acted as instruments of the powers that be for the perpetration of this fraud on the nation may speak out on the call of their conscience. In the present atmosphere of terror when a number of such instruments are alleged to have been liquidated because of the suspicion that they might divulge the truth, it is not easy for any one to muster courage to do so. But its possibility cannot be ruled out. If such an exposure takes place early, it may become the most effective factor for saving democracy and ensuring a safe future for it in India.

Apart from these factors for and against democracy in India and assuming that ultimately the factors for democracy will prevail and India will be saved from the impending danger of communist totalitarianism, certain steps need to be taken in the light of the experience of the last 25 years to see that democracy takes deep roots and is not left to the mercy of unscrupulous politicians. The first and foremost of them is the need to devise ways and means to ensure that elections in India are fair and free. For that, it is necessary that the composition, functions and terms of service of the those constituting the Election Commission be reviewed on the following lines:

(a) The Election Commission must consist of at least three members to be appointed by the President with the approval of the Parliament with 2/3 majority. The members of the Commission must be drawn from the judiciary and must have the same terms of service as a judge of the Supreme Court.

(b) Members of the Election Commission must be debarred from accepting any official assignment including governorship after their retirement.

(c) The working of the Election Commission should be open to inspection by the representatives of recognised political parties and it should not be entitled to make any changes in the rules for the conduct of elections and counting of votes without the concurrence of recognised political parties in Parliament.

(d) There should be a whole time Chief Electoral Officer in every state. Appointment and service conditions of such chief electoral officers should be the function of the Central Election Commission.

Secondly, provision should be made for counting of votes to take place immediately after the polling and counting must be done box-wise as had been the practice in the first four general elections. This is absolutely essential to prevent rigging and detect it quickly if it is resorted to.

Thirdly, in view of the scientific advance and the experience of chemical rigging of elections in a number of countries, the stamping of ballot papers should be replaced by punching of ballot papers by the voters at the time of polling.

Fourthly voting must be made a compulsory duty of every registered voter and failure to vote should be treated as an *offence punishable under law as is the practice in Australia* and some other countries. No transport should be used to carry the voters. This can be ensured by ordering all kind of vehicles off the road on the polling day.

Fifthly all recognised political parties should be given equal opportunity to use mass media to place their policies and programmes before the voters. The names of the candidates should be publicised by the Election Commission. The parties and candidates should be debarred from issuing any kind of posters during the election period. This would cut down election expenditure and prevent many kinds of electoral malpractices.

Because of the vastness of India and its large population the size and number of voters in each parliamentary consti-

tuency is too large to allow any living touch between the voters and their elected representatives, leave aside the participation of the voters in decision making processes. Assembly constituencies, too, are very big in most of the states. The remedy lies either in raising the strength of the Lok Sabha to an unmanageable figure or to devise some other means and patterns for election to Lok Sabha. It is a matter which requires detailed study and public debate.

The size of the constituencies of state assemblies can be cut down by cutting down the size of some of the over-sized states. About ten million population and ten thousand square miles of area should be the normal size of a state with exceptions to meet the needs of mountainous regions. Smaller states are essential not only for proper functioning of democracy but also for balanced economic development and effective national integration. Care should be taken while re-drawing the map of India that the factors like administrative convenience, historial background and linguistic, and cultural homogeneity are given due consideration. There can be, for example, three Marathi speaking, two Tamil speaking, three Telugu speaking and two Gujrati speaking States and the number of Hindi States can be increased to nearly twenty. Increase in expenditure on administration through multiplication of states will be more than offset by rapid economic development and more effective popular control. These States can be grouped into convenient zones to have common governors and high courts. Zonal councils can be set up to coordinate their development work and sort out inter-state problems of the zone.

Such smaller states can serve as a check on the growth of dynastic, caste or regional monopoly of power. Nehru family has been able to maintain its monopoly of power partly because it hails from U.P. which sends a solid block of 85 members to Lok Sabha and partly because it belongs to Brahmin caste. A man from outside Uttar Pradesh has little chance of ever becoming Prime Minister of India so long as the present imbalance between the size and population of states continues.

Political democracy in any country is ultimately sustain-

ed by grass root democracy in the form of representative institutions at the village, town, city and district level. They serve as the training ground for democracy at the higher levels through providing opportunity to the citizens to participate in decision making in regards to matters which concern them directly and immediately. The founding fathers of the Indian constitution provided for the composition, functions, elections, etc., to the State legislatures and Parliament in detail. But they left self-governing bodies at the lower level to the sweet mercy of the state governments. The only reference to grass root democracy in the Constitution is to be found in Article 40 in the chapter on Directive Principles of State Policy. It reads: "The state shall take steps to organise village panchayats and endow them with such powers and authority as may be necessary to enable them to function as units of self-government."

But even this directive principle like other directive principles of the Constitution has been honoured so far more in its breach.

As things are state legislatures and governments have paid scant attention to local bodies. Elections are either not held for long periods—there are cases where elections to municipal committees have not been held for over ten years—and if they are held and any party different than the party ruling the State, gets a majority in the municipal committee it is suppressed *on flimsy grounds. Since* neither any provision has been made in the constitution for regular elections to the local bodies nor any division of resources between the state and the local authorities has been made, the state government can conveniently ignore, suppress or starve the local bodies.

Things are worse in regard to village panchayats. The system of direct election on the basis of adult franchise has made the village panchayats most potent factor for rousing caste consciousness and destroying the age-old unity of the village communities. The powers and resources delegated to the village panchayats happen to be so meagre that they can do no real good to the concerned villages even if they

want to do so. Members elected to village panchayats have to undergo a course of training and their work is supervised by panchayat officers. But if any one of them gets elected to the State Assembly or Lok Sabha, he can be entrusted with the power to run the whole state or even the country as a whole if he manages to get the necessary backing of a number of legislators.

This situation must change. Local bodies must be vested with real power. Their tenure, resources and procedure about elections must be laid down in the Constitution itself through a suitable amendment of the Constitution. The elections to village panchayats should be held on the basis of consensus so that real elders of the village may man the panchayat and take decisions for the general good unhampered by caste or party considerations. The village panchayats should also be allocated enough resources to enable them to look after the local problems and needs of the village community without looking outside for everything. The village panchayats should also become the basis of economic planning which must be decentralised to make it effective and fruitful. No educational qualifications need to be laid down for election to village panchayats though there is real need and desirability of laying down some minimum educational qualification for becoming a member of a State legislature or Lok Sabha.

Existence of more than one political parties with the capacity to provide an alternative government with alternative programme and policies is an essential pre-requisite for the successful functioning of parliamentary democracy. Monopoly of power in the hands of one party or one leader, however broad-based, patriotic and efficient they may be, for a long period inevitably leads to rise of totalitarianism. Absence of a viable party or combination of parties in the opposition with a distinct programme and leadership has been one of the major causes of decline of democracy and rise of totalitarianism of the Congress party and Mrs. Gandhi in India. It is wrong to blame the Congress party alone for this state of affairs. It is partly a failure of the opposition parties and leaders and

partly a result of the system under which Indian democracy has been operating.

Since multiplicity of parties in opposition suits the interests of the Congress party, its encouragement to casteism, communalism and regionalism which has given rise to many small regional and communal parties and splinter groups, is understandable though not defensible. But those who decry such methods and policies of the Congress party and profess to place national interests above party interests have fared no better. They have allowed many an opportunity, when a viable alternative to the Congress party could have been created and projected, to slip. As things are none of the parties in the opposition today has the strength and potentiality to become a viable alternative to the Congress Party in near future. The vested interests of their present leadership as also the rigid position they have taken in the matter of even electoral alliances, has made any worth while and lasting unity between them very difficult if not impossible. There is therefore imperative need of a broad-based, nationalist and democratic party which may comprehend and absorb all the existing democratic parties. Only such a party with firm commitment to nationalism, democracy, Sarva Dharam Sam Bhav—equal respect for all Dharmas and ways of worship and Jan Kalyan—a practical programme for the welfare of the people, uninhibited by the current slogans about socialism leading to state monopoly of all economic power to the detriment of primary producer, the self-employed and the middle class, who constitute the back-bone of the nation, can arrest the drift towards totalitarianism and save democracy in India.

The electoral laws should also be suitably changed to prevent the rise of small parties and splinter groups which only contribute to the perpetuation of one party rule in the country.

The suggestion about proportional representation is impolitic and unpracticable in the Indian conditions. It will only lead to fragmentation of political life on narrow caste and communal lines. The parties which will be able to get block votes of certain communities or castes or regional

groups will come to have a dangerously big say in the legislatures which will further undermine the already precarious unity of the country. This, therefore, is a suggestion born out of despair and defeatism. It may ensure seats in the parliament to a few existing leaders who hold their parties in their firm grip but will not be conducive to the political health and survival of democracy in the country. Numerous groups without any one having a clear majority will only lead to political instability, quick rise and fall of governments and weightage to anti-national demands of communal groups which would ultimately lead to either disintegration of the country or rise of some kind of dictatorship.

Something, however, can be said for the German system under which 50 per cent members of parliament are elected by direct vote through single member constituencies and 50 per cent on the basis of party lists. The dangers referred to above are inherent in this system also. They can be, however, minimised if parties drawing sustenance from any one community or caste are debarred from contesting elections and concerted efforts are made to evolve two major parties.

But all these precautions and suggestions, even if they are fully implemented, cannot make democracy successful and ensure a safe future for it in the absence of freedom of thought and press and an enlightened and vigilant public opinion. Eternal vigilance, it has been said, is the price of liberty. The mass media, the press and platform are the means to educate the people and keep them vigilant about their liberties inherent in a democracy. Any person or group of persons who can get control over the mass media and the press can destroy democracy and establish their hegemony. Many a bloodless coup has taken place in the world through systematic misuse of mass media and press. That is how Mrs. Gandhi was able to stage a bloodless coup in India in 1969. That she is determined to maintain her firm hold over mass media and steamroll the press to fall in line with her is clear from her reported interview with S. Khushwant Singh, the editor of Illustrated Weekly of Bombay. No dictator in the world can tolerate freedom of thought, expression and press.

India has a long tradition of freedom of thought. But India has also a tradition of worshipping the rising sun. Both do not go together very well in the modern times when the person in power has the means to condition the minds and thoughts of the people through mass media.

Democracy like political freedom demands sacrifices. People of India value sacrifice for whatever cause it is made. If it is made in the noble cause of preserving democracy and all that goes with it, it is bound to have a deep impact on the minds of the Indian people. Had the leaders of the opposition parties like Congress (O), Swatantra and Jana Sangh which profess to be committed to democracy, been prepared to make sacrifices for the cause of democracy as soon as facts about operation murder democracy came to light, Mrs. Gandhi would have been in political wilderness by now. Their failure to make any sacrifice for the cause of democracy only points to either their lack of commitment to democracy or lack of political vision and understanding.

But *even now it is not too late. A determined and con*certed effort on the lines suggested above by all democrats, irrespective of their party affiliations, may even now save the situation and ensure a bright future for democracy in this ancient land of ours.

Appendix No. I

Copy of the letter received by Shri Nijlingappa, President, A.I. Congress, on 12-3-71.

MOST CONFIDENTIAL

Information for immediate action:

The so-called landslide victory by Indira Congress is in fact a mockery of democracy—Indian democracy is dying. It is now time to expose the conspiracy hatched out by Indira with Soviet aid. Here is thrilling proof, kept secret and most confidential by.....

Average 30 per cent of ballot papers were chemically *treated and marked.*

1. *How marks disappear?*

Take all the ballot papers of winning Indicate candidates—put the rubber stamp with care on all symbol spaces for all other candidates. Keep them in a box for not less than 36 hours. To our surprise, we will notice that they faint out and finally disappear in 30 per cent of ballot papers of Indira candidates.

2. How does a mark appear for Indicate Congress Candidates?

The name part of ballot papers for Indicate Congress candidates are again treated with special Chemical and the *symbol part of the same papers are marked with similar cross* in invisible ink. When the fold is made in the fashion follow*ed the Chemical from name space migrates to give violet cross* mark, as if it is original. This takes 72 hours for mark to *appear.*

3. *How to Verify?*

Collect the blank ballot papers from booths or areas where Indira candidates have won, make the folds exactly in the fashion suggested by election commission. Leave them

in a box for not less than 72 hours. You will observe in at least 25 to 30 per cent ballot papers that the cross mark does appear for Indicate candidates.

4. Why counting was not done immediately?

The entire Chemical process for feand (fraud?) takes more than 72 hours for complete success. Can you cite any example where the ballot papers for Centre were taken for counting before elapsing of 72 hours? Here is that one point towards the proof.

The distribution of ballot papers was unevenly done and wisely carried out. Mr. Morarji Desai may win with marginal votes, Gujrat and Mysore shall create surprises, unexpected of Bombay results have come to prove the conspiracy. It is said that ballot papers assigned for Borivli area were changed a night before the election day. You may verify from Collector of Bombay and Returning Officer of Borivli area whether the serial numbers previously assigned were withdrawn at last moment and fresh ones issued. Who did it? In this muddle, Borivali area only gave more votes to Dr. Shanti Patel whereas other area of his strong hold have given surprises.

It is requested that all ballot papers for all seats be sealed irrespective of Indicate candidates. They must be subjected to vigorous tests in any known national or international laboratory. You will know the correct position then only.

Act now to save India and her democracy.

Appendix No. II

Copy of a letter received by Shri Nijlingappa, President A.I. Congress, on 13-3-71.

MYSTERY IN THE VICTORY OF CONG.(I)

Dear

The mid-term poll for Parliament is over and amazing results are pouring in. By the time this letter is in your hands, the final results of the poll must be over. No doubt there was favourable wind for Cong.(I) in this Election and everybody did expect from the very beginning that this party would come out in the Parliament as the largest party. But at the very time everybody did expect that Cong.(I) would not be able to get a clear majority. All these calculations have gone wrong. Why? Do you know it?

I, as well as thousand others, feel that a foul has been played with the electorate and with the country. The opposition and the right thinking person has been humiliated. *But all are venturing the events disgustedly and helplessly.* Can you think and imagine as to what is the mystery behind all this mysterious result of the poll?

Think and think over again. There does exist a mystery and that is the foul play—played with top secrecy by using chemicalized paper and chemicalized ink—used in stamping his choice by the Electorate. You can brush aside the possibility but believe it that it has happened.

Aligarh—is a pointer to the fact. Had there been no reprint of the *ballot papers because of riots in the city the* result of the poll of Aligarh would also be the same. There at Aligarh the chemicalized paper and chemicalized ink could not be used.

Here is the mystery:

1. The chemicalized paper contained the stamp on the Cow & Calf but that stamp was not visible. A definite time say 7/10 days was required to be lapsed before the print on the Cow and Calf could come out and could be visible. At

the same time the ink used for stamping by the Electorate was to be vanished if the paper and the impression of the stamp remains in dark for 2/3 days. Such paper were put in the ballot papers in certain percentage with due cleverness that such papers will definitely be utilized in certain localities. Such mysterious paper was utilized in certain areas from where important leaders were standing as candidate opposing Cong.(I).

The experiment was first made in Maniram and when it proved successful, the bungling was put to large scale use in the Mid Term election.

Don't throw it as waste paper but think over again and try to get the paper and the ink used in the Elections—tested through some public enquiry.

A Scientist.

Appendix No. III

English translation of the letter in Urdu dated 15-3-71

Dear Madhok Sahib,

You must have been surprised at the result of mid term elections. *It is not only you and your party, the people belonging* to Indira Congress are themselves *puzzled* about this miracle. They had thought that even if a big section of the people voted for them on the consideration of having a stable government at the centre, they would hardly get 270 seats. *But much against this expectation they have got 350 seats* and almost all the top leaders of other parties have been *defeated. Some people think that the slogan of* "Garibi Hatao" has worked. Others think that slogan of socialism has worked. Some others think that Congress spent huge sums of money, made wild promises particularly to the Jhuggi dwellers, made lavish use of liquor, distributed clothes, quilts, Dhotis, etc., among the poor, misused government machinery and that the victory of the Congress was the *result of such things. No doubt all this did happen. But* they only cover the big fraud, the details of which are given below:

The fact is that this time Mrs. Indira Gandhi had made up her mind that she must get 2/3 of the total seats of Lok Sabha at all costs and to achieve that all means, fair or foul, must be employed. To that end a conspiracy was hatched. The officers in all states were instructed to send the ballot papers that had been got printed in *different states for scrutiny. In the meantime about three crores and twenty-seven* lakh ballot papers were printed and brought to India. All these ballot papers had the same names and symbols as other ballot papers. But a special chemical was applied to the symbol part of the ballot papers which could efface any ink mark put on it after some time and that chemical too could evaporate with the impact of *heat after some time. Before applying that chemical stamp* mark was put on cow and calf symbol, which was invisible at the time of voting, but which was to become visible automatically after the evaporation

of the chemical so that it may appear that the vote has been cast in favour of the Congress candidate.

When ballot papers reached the Election Commissioner, they were distributed according to booths in each Parliamentary constituency. Three hundred to four hundred chemically treated ballot papers were included in the first series of each polling booth and an equal number of genuine ballots was separated from the total. In this way booth-wise packets of ballot papers were prepared. These booth-wise packets for different constituencies were bundled together and returned to the electoral officers of the states. Thus the ballots used in each polling booth included three to four hundred chemically treated ballot papers and the rest were ordinary (not chemically treated). The intention was to see that at the time of polling chemically treated ballot papers which were bound to go 100% in favour of the Congress are polled first. The votes cast through the remaining non-chemicalised ballot papers, would be distributed among different parties and candidates according to the choice of the voters. Thus by securing first one lakh, or so, votes for the Congress candidate, his success was ensured because he would get some share of the remaining votes besides these first one lakh votes. The total number of chemically treated ballot papers that were thus distributed all over the country was 3,26,78,987 (three crores, twenty-six lakhs, seventy-eight thousand, nine hundred and eighty-seven). These were distributed in about 326 constituencies.

Why did the Election Commissioner change the counting pattern?

Even though the same old ballot boxes which had been used for many years were used in this election, in order to generate a particular amount of heat a special paint was applied in them. One ballot box becomes full after the insertion of at the most 250 ballot papers. That is why three to four ballot boxes are used at each booth. If there had been box-wise counting of votes, the first box would have been found to contain none but votes cast in favour of the Congress. Other parties would not have got a single vote out of the votes in the first box of each booth. This would have created suspicion as to why not a single vote out of the first two hundred or more votes was cast in favour of any other party. Therefore the novel method of mixing up of the ballots of a number of booths and then rotating them in a drum was adopted. The aim of doing this was to see that the invisible mark if it had not become visible because

of insufficient heat should become visible and the chemically treated and ordinary ballot papers should get mixed up so that all parties may find their votes in them although votes for Congress would be in overwhelming majority and other parties will have fewer votes. Almost one lakh such chemically treated ballot papers have been used in different parliamentary constituencies. In the constituency of Shrimati Indira Gandhi 1,75,000 (one lakh and seventy-five thousand) and in your constituency 1,25,000 (one lakh and twenty-five thousand) such ballots were used.

The question may be asked as to how some leaders of the opposition parties have won. As I have said above, about one lakh votes were reserved for the Congress candidate in each constituency. Wherever the opposition candidate had a lead of more than one lakh votes, he got a chance; otherwise he too would have lost.

It is clear from all this that it has not been an election but a fraud on the whole country. Fraud with the enemies of the country may be justified but not with the people of one's own country.

Your well-wisher,

An Indian who wants democracy
to survive

(Reprint from "Rigged or Free" by Balraj Madhok, published in 'Seminar' 159 for November, 1972).

Appendix No. IV

English translation of a letter in Hindi bearing the postal stamp of 26th March, 1971 and 27th March, 1971 received by Swami Rameshwarnand, Lok Sabha candidate from Karnal, on 28th March, 1971:

Swami Rameshwarnand,

I am an employee of Delhi police. Myself and an officer were called to a bungalow. We were made to take oath that we will not divulge the secret to anybody all through our life of what we were going to do. But out of sympathy, I am breaking that pledge and telling this thing to you. We were given three bags made of white cloth every one of which contained 52 thousand ballots—total number one lakh and fifty-six thousand—on which stamp had already been put on the cow and calf symbol and then we were put on a jeep. We delivered one bag containing 52 thousand ballot papers at the court of Sonepat Sub-division at 8-39 P.M., the other bag with 52 thousand ballot papers was delivered at the court of Panipat Sub-division and the third bag was delivered at Kaithal the same night. Total number of these ballot papers was one lakh and fifty-six thousand. The driver of the jeep was a Muslim. We returned to Delhi the same night.

I felt pained at what had been done. So when I came to Sonepat on some personal work, then I dropped this letter in a letter box at Sonepat.

Appendix No. V

Results of 1971 elections were pre-determined.

Some revealing side-lights

I

"At the time of the last mid term parliamentary elections, Mrs. Gandhi made a small list of opposition M.Ps. who would be allowed to win at the elections. It is now *learnt that the two names which figured in that list were* those of:

(1) Piloo Mody (Swatantra)

(2) A.B. Vajpayee (Jana Sangh)

D.F. Karaka in "Current" for week ending September 16, 1972 under the title "Top Confidential from New Delhi."

II

"The mass enthusiasm that had been generated encouraged Mrs. Gandhi to seek the "People's verdict." Her advisers were against the step. Even the government's own intelligence services gave her no more than 250 seats in a 521-member house. Only P.N. Haksar and R.N. Kao, Deputy Director, Central Intelligence Bureau, assured her that she would win around 350 seats. These two men were right —all the others wrong. That explains Haksar's re-employ*ment after his retirement* to the *same* pivotal position—Secretary to the Prime Minister and Kao was made the head *of the internal as well as external intelligence services* with the rank of Secretary, a status never enjoyed by any of his *predecessors.*"

Satindar Singh
in "Illustrated Weekly of India", Bombay,
dated Sept. 3, 1972.